THE WAY TO GOD

BY

MAXWELL SILVER

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BY
MAXWELL SILVER, D.D.

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TO TWO GENERATIONS

"Oh, for those who are lost to us, but are not forgotten!" (The Midrash.)

To the sainted memory of two prophetic souls of the generation that is past, who throughout their long and useful lives on three continents—in Eastern Europe, in America, and, finally, for many years in Jerusalem, Israel, where they recently departed this earthly scene—had so devoutly, nay, triumphantly, pursued the Way to God described in the following pages:—to my dearly departed parents—Rabbi Moses Silver and Dinah Seaman Silver, this little volume is dedicated in profound gratitude and in abiding love.

In love it is also dedicated to two young people of our new generation, to my children, Marion Silver Namm and Harold, and through them to the youth of the world, in the hope that they, too, may, in their own way, accept the still-promising challenge to explore the Way to God which the Prophets trod. . .

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to gratefully acknowledge here my deep indebtedness to my dear wife, Jane Baratz Silver, for the infinite patience and understanding which were hers during the years when this work monopolized all my leisure hours.

It is equally a pleasure to herewith express my sincerest thankfulness to my friend of many years, Jacob Kabak, and to my friend, Martha Binion Cahn, for their faithful reading of the manuscript with an expert eye to its literary correctness.

The Author

And behold, God passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before God; but God was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but God was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but God was not in the fire; and after the fire Kol Demamah Dakkah—a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood at the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a Voice unto him, and said . . .

(I Kings 19.11-13.)

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THE WAY TO GOD

PROLOGUE

MY SON OFFERS THE PERENNIAL CHALLENGE

I'm not angry, Dad, at the Gods for not existing, as some one has so intriguingly put it. I'm rather angry at the foolhardy theologians, who still insist that they *do* exist! I'm sore at the theologians only for their naive insistence, in these modern days, that in this bloody little world of ours there exists a Beneficent Providence!

This challenging exclamation, I vividly recall, as I now sit down, after several volcanic war years, to report to the thoughtful reader the clash of argument on the subject of the philosophic validity of religious faith between my son, Harold, and myself,—this challenging exclamation was, in effect, the opening salvo of Harold's full-dress bombardment

on this eternally controversial subject. Harold's quite unexpected outburst, it may be recorded, came during what promised to be but another of our usually quiet, intimate sessions of Jewish studies.

My son's challenge was immediately provoked by my scarcely finished exposition to him of the Problem presented in the famous Prologue in Heaven of the Book of Job. And who has not at least heard of that immortal epic of the religious soul—that supreme product of the Hebrew religious genius—which has continued, either to cast grave doubts upon, or to deepen the faith of men and women of countless generations in the existence of a Beneficent Providence?

My present report of the argument on the subject of religious faith is not verbatim. This will explain the omission of the customary but interminable quotation marks which usually clutter up reports of two-way discussions. I must add, however, that though this report reaches the kind reader in an un-verbatim manner, and in a somewhat organized literary fashion, it is nevertheless essentially faithful to the actual discussion that took place between us. Faithful, above all, to Harold's turbulent but thoughful mood of the moment. A mood, let me hasten to add, that was evoked by the novel and crucial episode—presently to be indicated—in the young life of this college youth of twenty summers (to which, winters, alas,

were soon to be added), whose naturally inquisitive mind had by then already been stimulated by his college and Jewish studies.

Job's Problem, Not To Mention Harold's Own

It seems to me, Dad, continued Harold, in effect, that Job's problem points up to Faith its apparently hopeless contradiction:—How, in decent reason, reconcile its Gospel of Hope in our world! Even though prompted by the laudable motive of saving his traditional faith, does not one lay himself open to the charge of intellectual obtuseness when he attempts philosophically to explain away the existence of real—and faith-shattering—evil in the world?

How preposterous, indeed, such an attempt in the face of our current world-devastating Second World War! And—to come even closer home—in the face of the current literal decimation by the Hitlerian beasts of the great European segment of our people—that historic Job amongst the Nations —and, ironically enough, the classic champion of a Benevolent Providence!

This unseemly outburst on my part, Dad, were indeed unpardonable, if I did not have an atoning suggestion to make. And one, let me add, that was, in fact, inspired by the great problem posed in the Book of Job.

As he good-naturedly but definitely pushed aside the many books of Jewish studies that lay piled up beside him, Harold went on:

There remains for us, Dad, a brief interlude of several months or, perhaps, weeks, at the end of which our good Uncle Sam will present me with that now ubiquitous Duffle Bag, and begin to train me to do my bit to make a proper end of our current World War II. Yes, Dad, that new and greater world slaughter, which the insane ambitions of the *Herrenvolk* of Hitlerland and the criminal appeasing politics of the leading numbskulls of all other lands have brought upon us. In order, then, that we may make timely use of this brief "calm before the storm," I ask that we put aside all our treasured books of Jewish lore, which, under your inspiring tutelage, let me assure you, I enjoyed delving into during the past years, and that we just concentrate on this question. I have, in mind, of course, the problem of the very validity of religious faith, which the Jobian problem poses to us of today in an even more incisive fashion than it ever could to the man of yesterday.

Can His Duffle Bag "Take It"?

What interests me greatly, at this juncture, Dad, is the very validity of that famous Biblical proposition:—"The end of the matter, all having been

heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole man." (Ecclesiastes 12.13.) Yes, the very validity of that definite Conclusion, which the Gentle Cynic of the Bible—or more correctly, according to the critical Biblical scholars, his interpolator—so sanguinely left for posterity. Can that duffle bag, I am now compelled to ask myself, which will soon be presented to me, "take" it? In view of my fast-approaching journey, which so poignantly makes that sanguine proposition suspect,—*can* that duffle bag of mine, I ask, comfortably make room for the tremendous faith which underlies that proposition? And if, out of respect for my people's cherished Tradition, I, good-naturedly, place it therein, together with all the other dear mementos of my dear ones, I again must ask myself: What—to use that nostalgic phrase you love to quote on occasion—what *tzedah la-derek*—what Provision for the Journey, may that ancient heavenly *manna* really add up to? What vital validity will it have for me in those dangerous days ahead, when, ten thousand miles away from home and dear ones, I may be crouching on all-fours in the fox-holes of the torrid pest-holes of the Western Pacific, in this "best of all possible worlds"?

The Self-dependent Superman Scores Up Two World Wars!

Perhaps, you already sense what I am up to, Dad.

For some Freudian reason, I have a strong desire at this juncture in my young life to engage you in a brutally frank discussion on the current validity and relevancy of the faith, which is so confidently assumed by Judaism and the other great religions, which, in one way or another, have followed in its theistic lead. Does, *can* this faith, I ask, stand up to the buffeting gales of the new "facts of life," revealed to us by Science and the critical reason of contemporary man? It may be that, despite Copernicus, Darwin, Marx, and Freud, and notwithstanding the radically altered world-picture—apparently so damaging to our traditional faith—which these scientific path-finders have created for us—it may be that the contemporary harried and tired theologian has nevertheless managed to ferret out for it some tiny, philosophically safe, loophole. If so, I must further ask: What vital significance, what high utility, what *relevancy,* may that ancient faith have for the twentieth century man? For him, I mean, who has learned to depend on himself. Yes him, who, by the aid of the technological tools, which his inventive genius has put into his nimble hands, has succeeded, by his own human efforts, in taming, in ever increasing measure, his hitherto mysterious, feared, and unresponsive adversary—Nature.

These new scientific gadgets of this modern, incredible superman, to be sure, if unwisely used by

him, may blow his entire benighted race into oblivion. Granted this possibility, however, this modern wizard may rightly ask, how will his clinging to that ancient faith save him from such an eventuality, any more than it can save his race from that possible cosmic cataclysm of Nature's own doing that may destroy his entire planet, a possibility foreseen by some distressed scientists? Or is there really something, despite these delightful possibilities—and in that uncertain interlude—that the old faith can somehow accomplish for that self-dependent, miraculously inventive, all-conquering, but eternally bungling "superman," who has managed to score up two world-wars in one generation? And if so, pray, what may that something really be?

Harold Divines My Hopeful Suspicions

I note, Dad, a surprised and telling smile on your unruffled countenance at my last question. I guess that with your usual insight you say to yourself something like this: Thank God, this youngster of mine is after all no hopeless dogmatist! Despite his young years, *mirabile dictu*—to use one of your favorite expressions—he is able actually to register a significant question mark at the tail-end of his all-out scepticism! He speaks—I further suspect you saying to yourself—of some Freudian reason for wanting to engage me in a "brutally

frank discussion" on religious faith. Hence, he would rather than not—especially at this time—hold on to that faith—if he really could—despite Darwin, Freud, *et al.* It would appear, then, that what he is really after is to discover what my own ideas are on that much-disputed "end of the matter." Perchance, those thoughts of mine on that eternally vital but controversial subject may furnish a little more philosophical substance—a little more vital staying power—to that spark of faith that, however faintly, nevertheless still flickers within him? Possibly, my own more matured convictions on that "end of the matter" may help to set aglow that much-submerged spark of his, which should prove of some vital value to him, especially at this critical stage of his young life? There is a job here to be done—and not an altogether hopeless one—on the part of one who has somehow achieved that sustaining faith!

Is Open-minded, But—

If these are your unspoken thoughts, Dad, I must confess that you are not far off the mark. This confession, as you no doubt realize, has been not an easy one for me to make. But in order to encourage you seriously to take up my challenge, I have decided to make it nevertheless. I am not unmindful of your utter disinclination to enter

into disputation with the closed-minded, especially on the explosive subject of religion—because, as you have often stated, of the futility of such an undertaking. Yes, I, for one, am still open-minded on the subject. *But,* as you have no doubt already guessed from the tenor of my initial outburst, "I," nevertheless, as the Scotsman would say, "have my doubts about it."

Such being the case, it is only proper, Dad, that I duly warn you, before you make up your mind to enter into our proposed discussion, that I intend to play therein the role of the Jobian Satan! *Sans,* however, his—shall we call it?—ungentlemanly cynism on the subject of *Man.* I shall listen attentively, and I am sure, absorbedly, to your presentation of your own religious position. And this very thing, incidentally, I am anxious to hear in full-dress, as it were, since it occurs to me, I have not as yet had the opportunity to hear a complete exposition of it. With undivided attention, do I expect to follow all your arguments on the subject. But, I must again warn you that I shall continue to register my objections—and doubts. I can assure you, however, that I shall always be prepared to concede when, in my opinion, you have scored a point, and helped by that much to unbalance that invisible, but ever-present, sagacious and relentless "Sceptic" within the soul of this benighted "modern."

The Traditional God-Conception, Or One Of The Modern Designs For Divinity?

At this moment, by the way, I have no definite idea what your own God-Conception is. If your idea on the subject is entirely faithful to Jewish tradition, you will certainly have a tough job with me.

Again, I note, Dad, a knowing smile on your unfurrowed brow. I wonder what it portends. If you actually and surprisingly come forward as a new doughty Elijah, warring for Jehovah against what the orthodox would, I suppose, call, the new *Baalim,* that should be a lot of fun. But knowing your usually solid reasoning supporting any strongly held conviction on your part, it is very likely, I fear, that the fun may turn out to be at my expense. At the moment, I do not rule out, in my mind, this position on your part as a possibility, recalling, as I do, your great respect for the religion of the great Prophets of Israel and for the religious philosophy of the Book of Job. However, should you come forward with that new Evolution-inspired, evolving God of some of the moderns, who thereby attempt to surmount the steep hurdle of the Problem of Evil and other philosophical difficulties, you will, I caution you, still have a tough job with me. For apropos of this and the other, untraditional Modern Designs for Divinity, the

question that bothers me greatly is this: Even if we grant the greater rational or "scientific" plausibility of these new-fangled God-conceptions, what significant and vital meaning do these Gods really have for the human spirit? If the Evolution-inspired God, for instance, is obliged to struggle as he goes along with his cosmic business, what real help can we, the even frailer humans, expect from him in our own struggles to undo our own earthly mischief? And I am not even mentioning here the even more "scientifically" reduced "Gods" of other "moderns."

Reasons For His Choice Of Antagonist

You may ask, Dad, why, at this juncture, I choose none but yourself as the victim for this proposed serious tussle of wits. I shall be honest with you in answering this pertinent question, notwithstanding the fact that the answer may prove embarrassingly complimentary to you. One must, however, (this, with his tongue in cheek) be honest with one's friends on important matters, no matter how it may hurt them! Thanks to my knowledge that for many years now, you have not had, nor are you likely to have in the future, a professional axe to grind on the religious question; thanks, again, to my realization of your great respect for human reason and your passion

for truth, no matter to what unusual paths the latter may lead; and thanks, finally, to the contagious appeal of your resolute and hopeful philosophy of life as Jew and man, which must, to some extent, at least, stem from the faith that is in you, —thanks to all that, Dad, I say, I have a "hunch" that you may prove more helpful to me on this highly involved and most controversial subject than many another learned religionist I know.

I have but one plea to make in connection with your hoped-for acceptance of my challenge. My plea (this, with a knowing twinkle in Harold's eyes) is simply this. As difficult as this may be for philosophers, I trust nevertheless that you will attempt to make the exposition of your own religious position—to which I am, indeed, looking forward with much anticipation—as well as your rejoinders to my arguments and comments, as untechnical and as uninvolved as possible. Yes, so simple that even an *am-ha-aretz* (an ignoramus) like myself may easily follow them.

Harold now fell silent for a long while. Questioningly but hopefully, he now fixed his gaze upon me, as I was sitting on my customary, big, generously reclining, red-upholstered chair in our living room, with the Hebrew version of the Book of Job resting on my lap. There I sat motionless, outwardly calm, but, as one might surmise, inwardly moved. Inwardly moved, indeed,

no less by my son's challenge than by the poignant realization of his imminent departure to a destiny unknown. He broke his silence long enough to suggest that I begin our discussion of the problem of religious faith with the problem posed by the Book of Job. Then Job-Harold rested. . . .

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHALLENGE IS ACCEPTED

After catching my breath, as it were, following the foregoing delightfully sincere and intellectually intriguing statement of my son, I unhesitatingly informed Harold that I decided to accept his challenge.

Unhesitatingly, indeed! To begin with, I was satisfied that the challenging questions posed by Harold, in his own Jobian Prologue, were the inevitable questions that an intelligent young man, particularly of this day and age, would legitimately and profitably ask. Again, I could not but recall that these were the very questions that I, myself, asked and struggled over, no end, during the furiously sceptical and, alas, irrevocable period of my own youth. And, finally, I felt confident that the fact of my achievement of my own faith, as a result of many years of study and meditation on the subject—and one's faith must be a hard-won achieve-

ment to be worthy of its salt!—should help to bring forth from his proposed intellectually frank discussion some effective answer for him to this ever-challenging problem. An answer, that is, that may prove to be not only religiously but also philosophically adequate for him—and, perhaps, for others who wisely choose to be open-minded on both subjects of religion and philosophy. To the philosophically learned, I might add at once that when I say "philosophically adequate," I do not mean rationalistically fool-proof. But more on this point later.

In Extremis:
A Realistic Start On The Subject

To start with, son, I said to Harold, I definitely find promising for the forthcoming discussion of our problem the fact that you feel impelled to solicit a discussion on the validity of religious faith at this time—in your present period of "storm and stress." People have always returned to religious faith when they were *in extremis!* Even if only to end up by questioning its validity. This significant fact, if it proves nothing else, eloquently points up man's inescapable *need* for it in his most critical moments, when nothing else—not even the "last word" of man's scientific ingenuity—will help! This confronting of Faith, on the part of man, under fire,

as it were, ought, to my mind, to be the most realistic starting point for the discussion of its philosophic validity. For only when its need is thus eminently experienced, or at least realized, can one give it the very serious thought it deserves. Such realization, in other words, opens the way for, at least, a decently sympathetic approach to its theoretic problems, or to its possible philosophic justification.

This fine point, Dad, is well taken. Please go on.

The Surprising Religious Position Taken

I continued as follows:

In the bewildering welter of the philosophies of religious faith, ancient and modern, the faith in God as Moral Personality is the classic and traditional Jewish conception of religious faith. It is, in fact, the legacy bequeathed to the Western World, in one form or another, by the Biblical Prophets and Sages of Israel. A legacy—need I remind you?—that is much disparaged these days, not only by atheists and agnostics, but also by many so-called liberal religionists. It is, however, in behalf of this religious philosophy, in its classical or Prophetic essentials, my dear Harold, that I mean here to be bold enough to break a lance!

I find it important to add here, in passing, that

it goes without saying that in my arguing for the philosophic validity of the Prophetic God-conception, and notwithstanding the fact that I shall confine myself to illustrative citations of Hebrew Prophetic sources in my development of the Prophetic Argument for the Prophetic God-idea, I shall be at the same time engaged in defending the God-conception that is common to all the three Great Theistic Religions. For despite their creedal differences, all these have the Prophetic God-conception in common. I may have occasion to take exception, for instance, to what is generally referred to as the other-worldliness of primitive Christianity, which, incidentally, has been in modern times reinterpreted by Christian apologists in the true Prophetic, eminently social and this-worldly spirit. If so, it is needless to explain to the thoughtful reader that such strictures do not concern the fundamental God-conception of Christianity. The latter, whatever its important doctrinal divergencies from the strictly monotheistic Hebrew God-conception, is nevertheless theistic, and, as such, is in essential agreement with the Hebrew Prophetic conception of God as Moral Personality.

Our occasional "exceptions" of this nature, then, are to be considered as differences among friends, as it were. The Argument, therefore, to be developed here in behalf of the Prophetic God-conception, covers not merely the Hebrew but the

Christian God-conception as well, and, it goes without saying, all theistic God-conceptions that are in essential agreement therewith. The Christian religionist, for one, may, then, follow this Argument with no less interest than the Jewish religionist, for it obviously concerns the basic premise of his Faith as well.

Harold Applauds My Courage, But Discovers Me Immediately In Troubled Waters

Hear! Hear! was Harold's exclamatory comment. A bold hazard, indeed, Dad! And if you succeed in doing a tolerable job at it, it will no doubt give a needed fillip to the flagging spirits of many of our traditional religionists. I mean, particularly, the educated amongst them, who have, to their discomfort, alas, philosophically digested the several opposing religious philosophies that were inspired by Darwinism. I seem to find not a few of them very much disposed to be rather diffident of their religious position, speaking of it, if at all, in more or less guarded, apologetic undertones. Having expressed this hope, however, need I hasten to remind you, Dad, that your announced highly surprising position confronts us immediately, and most uncomfortably, with that Jobian facet of the Problem of Evil to which I previously alluded, and with which, as you recall, I suggested

that you begin the exposition of your own religious position.

A Serious Dilemma Is Admitted; It Is Agreed That I Tackle It Later

Indeed, it does, I rejoined. No other religious philosophy finds itself equally obligated reluctantly to claim this problem as its very own, legitimate, though most obstreperous child. Infinitely more than the guardians of any other religious position, the defenders of the faith, in behalf of which I propose to break a philosophic lance, must succeed in taming this, its very own and most troublesome offspring. Or, to drop the metaphor, this faith must, indeed, find a satisfactory answer for that Jobian problem of innocent human suffering in a world supposedly under the benign guidance of a Beneficent Providence. If you will bear with your rash pater for a while, however, I will, with your consent, for reasons that will become evident later, defer my treatment of this particular problem to the end of my statement of the Prophetic religious philosophy. Let me at once assure you, however, lest you may be unduly concerned over your pater's philosophic safety in the midst of the philosophically troubled waters wherein he has chosen to swim, that the heroic founders of the classic Jewish faith were themselves not in the least inno-

cent of this most vexing problem; that they were, indeed, profoundly aware of it, and that they, moreover, effectively grappled with it. In fact, in the case of the author of the immortal Book of Job, they gave a respectable, nay, an inspiring religious-philosophic account of it, "solving" it, as we shall see, in such a way as to leave their Prophetic faith, however philosophically purified, definitely unshaken, nay, in the conviction of many thoughtful people, even triumphant!

With such encouraging assurance, Dad, I am prepared to hold my patience in leash, even as regards this perennially crucial faith-challenging problem.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AUTHOR'S POSITION INTRODUCED

Now, you may well ask, I resumed, why I should choose to go out on a limb to defend what is generally considered these days a most difficult philosophic position, to say the least. My two-pronged answer is as follows:

(1) My own re-examination of what we shall hereafter call Prophetic or theistic faith, has brought me to the conviction that its essential message adds up to a transcendent boon to the spirit of man, as much today as in the long past. If so, it is the height of human wisdom to cling to it, despite the loud protestations of the sceptics.

(2) It is questionable, in my mind, upon a re-examination of the various "Ways" of Philosophy, whether, even in this ultra-scientific and super-sceptical age, those men and women, who are disposed, for the just mentioned reason, to hold on

to that faith, need be confronted with inescapable philosophic reasons that should compel them to renounce that supreme boon to the spirit of man.

Now, what is the essential message for the human spirit of this faith, as it has come down to us from its Prophetic founders and has become woven into the mental fabric of the Western world? And I am referring, of course, to those essential doctrines of this faith that the unprejudiced, objective student, irrespective of his own inclinations in the matter, finds clearly and unmistakably revealed therein, though frequently enough, to be sure, behind some of the ugly trappings of its institutionalized life. Yes, I have in mind those very doctrines which the modern prejudiced lecturers on "The Dark Side of Religion,"[1] who have permitted themselves to be blinded by its "dark" trappings, have significantly chosen to overlook, or, at best, to minimize.

The Despair Of The "Modern Temper"

The transcendent human value of its message can perhaps be best understood when seen against the bleak background of despair that has gripped the minds of many moderns. This despair—need I recall?—is the result of their reaction to the new scientific revelations of our universe, which they—for reasons, incidentally, that are not philosophic-

ally inescapable to the philosophic theist—have dogmatically chosen to interpret on the atheistic premise. Having accepted this premise, it was, of course, but natural that their philosophy should be, as it indeed is, punctuated by that poignantly pessimistic, little refrain:—"Poor, little man, compelled to live precariously *alone* in a universe, not at all made for him!"

In this connection, it is enlightening to quote but one sample of the many versions of this despairing "modern temper," namely, the last paragraph of Bertrand Russell's essay, "A Free Man's Worship":

> Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race, the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built; undismayed by the empire of chance to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his

> condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power.[2]

A depressing, however Promethean, message, I agree, Harold remarked..

But, I resumed, for an even deeper, and, to boot, an intellectually and morally nihilistic, version of this despair—and need I indicate that it, too, is based on the atheistic assumption?—one may consult the philosophic essay, entitled, *The Modern Temper,* by Joseph Wood Krutch. This author strenuously attempts to rob "poor little man" even of his Tragedy-inspiring spiritual dignity which Bertrand Russell—*mirabile dictu*— still imputes to him, soundly prompted, as Russell is, by the conviction that this dignity grandly helps Man to "ennoble his little day!" Unrecognized echoes in Russell, as we shall see, of the far more hopeful message of the Book of Job.

While this pessimistic cry is laboriously disparaged, I note, by the more recent exponents of the Naturalistic school of philosophy, one finds even in the latter's disavowal of it the inevitable melancholy note of resignation, evidenced by their telltale counsel of "not expecting the impossible" from their positively all-inclusive, much-ballyhooed "Nature" (Nature, with a capital "N":—Loud cheers!) that is held up as a substitute for God.

—And The Message Of Hope Of Prophetic Faith

Against this doctrine of despair, or, at best, melancholy resignation—the natural child of the atheistic *faith* (and to the philosophically discriminating—need I indicate?—it is really no more than that at its philosophical bottom), Prophetic Theism continues to point up the contrary doctrine of Hope!—the natural child of *its* faith (on the philosophic merits of which, it can argue, as we shall see as we go along, as intelligently, at least, as its vociferous opponents).

Man's At-Homeness In The Universe

Many-faceted, indeed, is the Hope of this faith —and lifting to the spirit of Man!

This faith gives man the hope-laden confidence of his spiritual *at-homeness* in this otherwise frigidly strange and spiritually bewildering universe. It gives man ultimate spiritual *status* in that universe, firmly anchoring, as it does, his ultimate spiritual destiny in the ultimate, Divine, cosmic scheme of things.

Man's Fundamental Dignity

In its identification of man's essential being with the fundamentally moral nature of its God,

it gives man ultimate *moral dignity,* of which the evolutionizers and psychologizers, and expounders of the "modern temper," labor so strenuously, if unwisely, to rob him.

The Sacredness Of Individual Personality—Democracy's Ultimate Bastion In Theism

This faith gives man the socially-redeeming sense of the sacredness and, consequently, the *inviolability* of the life of every individual human being, created as he is, in accordance with its great doctrine, in the Divine Image. Democracy, it is important to note, which is ultimately based on the sacredness of human personality, has no more ultimate and certain foundation for its fundamental thesis of the equal worth of every individual human being. The Nietzschean doctrine of the "Superman," in accordance with which the masses of mankind are regarded as mere fodder for the Moloch-maw of the aristocratic Blond Beast, will forever find its deadliest enemy in the theistic doctrine that every human being is a child of the One Divine Father.

Confidence In The Triumph Of The Right

Moreover, it is not enough to say that theistic faith gives man courage to fight the battles of the

moral life. Many non-theistic souls throughout the ages have displayed supreme moral courage. Theistic faith does more! It inspires man, in addition, with his desperately needed *assurance* in the ultimate triumph of his moral battles, thanks to its stout conviction of the existence of a "Power not-ourselves that makes for righteousness."

The Ultimate Worthwhileness Of The Moral Life

This faith, furthermore, gives its devotee the invaluable staying conviction in the ultimate worthwhileness of all of our moral and ideal strivings. Yes, even of those acts of courage which entail the supreme sacrifice. This, of course, follows from its lifting doctrine that that segment of ourselves that motivates our moral and ideal living is ultimately involved in, and is identified with, the eternal moral life of God.

Its Ultimate Mystic Promise Of Awareness Of, And Communion With, The Object Of Its Faith

This faith, finally, holds forth to man the mystic promise that, by virtue of sacrificially moral living, his faith may be transmuted into a staying conviction, nay, in its highest mystic experiences, into an *awareness* of the existence of, and his affin-

ity with, the Ultimate Moral Life of the Universe, an awareness which may inspire him with the psalmist, to *sing*:

> Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
> And beside Thee I desire none upon earth.
> My flesh and my heart faileth;
> But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever! (Ps. 73. 25-26.)

"Serenity And Confidence"

Such, essentially, being the nature and message of this faith, even the atheist must recognize the unique boon which it brings to those men and women whose lives are anchored therein. Yes, even he must concede the significant fact that no other religious outlook—much less, a non-religious philosophy—can give man as potent and uniquely exalting a staying power, as this faith does, to face life's inevitable struggles, disillusionments, suffering, bereavement, senescence, and even, death. Instead, then, of the despair, of which the "modern temper" speaks, or of the counsel of not expecting the "impossible," which is the best that the less despairing naturalistic philosopher can offer, this faith can and does offer man that soul-steadying *"serenity and confidence,"* of which the prophet Isaiah, out of the depths of his own theistic ex-

perience, triumphantly and convincingly speaks.

A Well-Tested Treasure

If these, then, are truly the all-time essentials of theistic faith, as I understand it,—and deferring for a later moment the question of the philosophic validity of this faith—it is easy to see why despite the Spinozas of the world, who would disparage that faith in the name of a vacuously impersonal and allegedly higher God-conception, why, despite all the anti-theistic worshippers of Science, who would, in its name, dogmatically argue it out of court, despite all the moralistic protestations of those anti-religionists who choose to confine their vision exclusively to the "dark side" of religion, —it is, I say, not difficult to see why, notwithstanding all the good and bad arguments launched in its disparagement by these and many other varieties of its enemies, the great majority of mankind—churched or unchurched—still remains unimpressed! This great majority of mankind is, indeed, in the position of the enamoured lover. The latter but smiles at his pompous elders, who arrogate to themselves the superior wisdom of disparaging his beloved. For he is instinctively certain that they cannot possibly *know* the precious charms of his beloved as he himself knows them. The great majority of mankind, out of that deep

insight of its age-old wisdom, instinctively *knows* that it has in that faith a well-tested treasure. And failing to see anything better in what is proffered it in its stead by its critics, wisely insists on clinging to its old love.

Where The Greater Wisdom Resides

As for the theistic philosophers, who but voice the philosophically unorganized insight on this subject of the great majority of mankind, they, to be sure, recognize the philosophic genius of an anti-theistic Spinoza. However, they rightly refuse to impute to him all philosophic omniscience on the subject. They readily recognize, also, the great usefulness of Science for our more exact knowledge of Nature; but they recognize at the same time the ultimate limitations of Science, especially touching those realms, which, they perceptively realize, are beyond its possible ken. They, furthermore, readily grant the justness of such moralistic protestations as those of Morris R. Cohen anent the "dark side" of religion, but they recognize at the same time that an ugly exterior may often conceal a kernel of the greatest price. Appropriately, then, in this connection, the theistic philosopher may, and does, pose what in contemporary logic is called a meaningful question, to wit: Does not the greater wisdom in this in-

stance reside in the untutored insight of the great majority of mankind, rather than in the philosophically caparisoned protestations of the varied critics of that insight? And very properly may the theistic philosopher turn the famous Biblical declaration into this thought-challenging question: "May not the voice of the multitude truly represent the Voice of the Living God?" . . .

If Not Lucretius, Perhaps Isaiah?

May not one, then, soberly venture the suggestion—now that the fear-element has been removed from Prophetic religion, thanks to a more enlightened understanding of its conception of God as Law, Justice and Love, now, moreover, that the fundamental value of this religion's message of "serenity and confidence" has been re-discovered and newly recognized,—may not one, I say, soberly suggest that what we need today is not another Lucretius, but another Isaiah? You, of course, recall the message of the former's famous poem, "On the Nature of Things." It urged his contemporaries to forget their amoral and capricious Gods—and the fear of them. For it was not they, Lucretius insisted, who run the cosmic show, but rather all-inclusive Nature, with its all-out impersonal, mechanical laws, with which those Gods—if they exist at all—cannot interfere. This message, I say, one may soberly

argue today, however liberating it no doubt proved to be to many of Lucretius' enlightened contemporaries, who had believed in those kinds of gods, is apparently not all-sufficient for the still much-troubled, though completely "liberated," souls of our own day. Perhaps, then, instead of a new Lucretius, a new Isaiah is needed today effectively to reinterpret the old-new message of "serenity and confidence" at the heart of Prophetic theism to the souls of so many moderns that—for the lack of it—are so hopelessly attuned to Life's Minor Key?

Hear, hear! exclaimed Harold. This, Dad, deserves a good "hand," despite the protestations of my "inner sceptic." Please, go on!

Why We Rather Turn To The Classic Founders Of The Theistic Faith

Thanks, son, I resumed. In coming now to your requested full-dress statement of this faith, it is but proper that I state at once that I am planning to present it to you in what I believe to be the most effective, though not the customary way. I plan to present it through the very mouths, as it were, of those classic founders of that faith, who lived, and lived by that faith, namely, the Biblical Prophets and Sages of Israel.

It has been my conviction all along that the

modern philosophers of religion have given too little attention and study to the underlying philosophy of the theistic faith of these classic founders of that faith, while they have devoted too much attention to the highly intellectual God-conceptions of the pro-religious Greek philosophers. If for no weightier reasons—and such, too, will become evident, I believe, as we go along—the fact of the incomparably greater influence that the Prophets and Sages of Israel have exerted upon the religious life of the Western world, *they* should have been, and should, I seriously suggest, even now, be more profitably consulted on the subject than the Greek philosophers. There is greater promise here, it seems to me, for a more meaningful and inspiring statement of the theistic thesis.

The Different Ways To God Of Greek Philosopher And Hebrew Prophet

It is important to realize that the prophets and sages of Israel came to their theistic faith through an entirely different route than have the pro-religious philosophers of ancient Greece.

The Greek religious philosophers came to their ideas of God, primarily, through the same route that they properly took in their study of Nature, namely, the route of our discursive reason. And

since our reason is the highly impersonalized discipline that it is, it was inevitable that their God-conceptions should have turned out to be such highly impersonalized affairs. As have, also, alas, the God-conceptions of their "idealistic" disciples, who followed their predominantly rational lead.

While far from disparaging reason, the Prophets and Sages of Israel—more wisely, as I see it, and more effectively—took quite a different route. The exact nature of that approach will become evident as we go along.

I have had occasion elsewhere to indicate very briefly the God-approach of the Prophets and Sages of Israel. As I should like to make that brief statement the text, as it were, of my present fuller discourse on the subject, I beg to quote it herewith:

> Furthermore, when reflecting upon its sublime manifestation in the history of mankind, we may still regard conscience not only as that precious something which gives supreme and ultimate dignity to human nature and life, but also as that golden thread, that, in accordance with the religious doctrine so immortally taught by the Prophets of Israel, unites the human with the divine and affords man the supreme intimation of the reality of the Divine in human nature and in the universe.[3]

Were The Prophets And Sages Of Israel Philosophers?

Now, the Biblical Prophets and Sages of Israel were not philosophers in that sense of the term, made famous by the ancient Greek philosophers. The Prophets' august and definitive *Thus Saith The Lord's* were, of course, not prefaced by those rational "proofs" of God's existence, introduced by the pro-religious philosophers of ancient Greece and so very studiously and naively followed by their later disciples. For this reason, I suppose, when reading the immortal utterances of even the greatest of them, the justly called Six Great Prophets of Israel, who have imparted to the Western world, in one form or another, its common religious-moral outlook on life,—for this reason, I say, we may, when perusing their messages today, get the impression that the Prophets of Israel took their personal-moral God simply for granted, without benefit of profound intellectual and moral struggle.

An Incidental Good Word For Simple Faith

Before questioning these cursory impressions, I should like to make the observation in passing that this way of taking or accepting or living one's faith is a very sensible, because helpful, one. The

average man, if he be wise, accepts it just that way, in the face of whatever disillusionment on that subject, for the reason that only such acceptance enables him confidently to carry on his life's work. So must—and does—even the theistically disposed philosopher at the weary end of his inevitably undefinitive intellectual struggles with the antinomies—the vexing philosophic pros and cons —of the theistic argument,—yes, even he, if he really wishes to profit by its essential message of "serenity and confidence."

Ditto For "Thus Saith The Lord!"

Also, in passing, let me point up the potent pedagogic value of the categorical tone of the Prophets' *Thus saith the Lord* pronouncements. The absolute authoritativeness of these pronouncements, with their definite implication that there could be no question of the existence of the God in whose name the Prophets spoke, accounts for much of their powerful and sustained influence on the life of the Western world. Yes, even on that of our own very critical day and age. Religionists who speak their message with absolute certitude, and particularly such of them as witness to their faith by their sacrificial life, inspire wide, contagious confidence in their faith and its message. On occasion, they even inspire the all-out religious

sceptics with a healthy respect for that faith. In fact, such faith often compels sceptics—at least the more perceiving and honest amongst them—reluctantly to register a philosophically significant question mark at the end of their cocksure scepticism.

Men Of Deep Brooding, Profound Thinking—And Sacrificial Living

But to return to our main argument. This absoluteness of the Prophets' religio-moral utterances was not at all due to intellectual simple-mindedness on their part. Of this, the serious and critical student of their writings is well aware.

These great Hebrew religious path-finders were unmistakably gifted with uniquely alert minds. They were men of deep brooding and profound thinking on the ultimate mysteries of existence: particularly on the ultimate mysteries of the human drama, as they impinged upon their minds during the frequent volcanic and tragic periods of the life of their own people. Their final exalted *awareness* of God as "the Power not-ourselves that makes for righteousness"—as the One, Who, whatever infinitely else He may be, is, above all, fundamentally Moral Personality, and, as such, is supremely concerned with moral values, and is possessed, moreover, with power to make these values ultimately triumph on earth, however inscrutable to short-

visioned man the processes of that triumph may often appear to be—, this intellectually challenging but mystically unshakable God-vision of theirs, it is important to recall, came to the Prophets and Sages of Israel after a long process of deep brooding and profound thinking—and sacrificial living. Yes, after long brooding and profound thinking that was ultimately inspired by their sacrificial participation in the unfolding, tumultuous and tragic political and social experiences of their people. And especially at those cataclysmic junctures when the latter felt the almost annihilating impact upon their lives of the warring, imperialist ambitions of the surrounding world-empires.

And by the same route of deep brooding and profound thinking and sacrificial living, have come to the Prophets and Sages of Israel their other, deep and meaningful religious-moral doctrines—on some of which we shall have occasion briefly to reflect as we go along—which in their thought logically and inexorably emerged as corollaries from this central God-insight of theirs.

Behind The Prophets' "Thus Saith The Lord"

Behind, then, the apparently simple *Thus saith the Lord* and the other deliverances of the prophets and sages of Israel, as we will have occa-

sion to see, there lay more than simple faith. Faith was theirs, to start with, to be sure. That was, of course, their people's ancient heritage, as it was that of all ancient humanity. But their supreme *confirmation* in their faith, as evident in its final efflorescence in the writings of the Six Great Prophets of Israel, in some of the great Psalms, and in the immortal Book of Job, with its challenging treatment of the Problem of Suffering, as well as in some of the great teachings of their Talmudic heirs,—this entire religious philosophy was the culmination of centuries of profound and lofty thinking and morally sacrificial living on the part of these religious-moral thinkers of Israel. And all of them, of course, only expressed, trenchantly and nobly, the deep philosophically-mystical spirit of their people. The finally developed faith, in brief, of the Prophets and Sages of Israel was a painful, intellectual-mystical *achievement*. It was the ripe fruit of their long, deeply-thought-out and lived-through spiritual experiences. It was the end-product of their intellectual-mystical interpretation of the powerful, inner, spiritual-moral forces that moved them to become prophets and teachers of their own people and, ultimately, of Western mankind.

My Jewish *morale*, Dad, broke in Harold, is getting a powerful shot in the arm—and without your directly intending it at this moment. And may I

add that you are hitting at a good clip?

Profound Thinking On The Deep Things Of Existence, Not The Monopoly Of Hellas

Thanks, son, I rejoined. What I am trying to bring forward is the fact that profound thinking on the deep things of existence was not, in ancient times, as has been commonly believed, the monopoly of Hellas. There was, to be sure, philosophy in the classic, Greek sense of the term only in ancient Greece, and not in ancient Israel. But the modern student of philosophy knows that Philosophy has *many* "Ways," and that each has something significant to tell about the Mystery that is—and will forever be—our Universe.

Professor Irwin Edman of Columbia University, for instance, properly speaks of "Four Ways of Philosophy"—the title of his recent work. These, he names as Philosophy as Logical Faith (or Idealism), Philosophy as Social Criticism, Philosophy as Mystical Insight, and Philosophy as Nature Understood (Naturalism). You will note that among these significant "Ways" of Philosophy, we have Philosophy as Mystical Insight. For the latter, as we shall have occasion to note in more detail later on, Professor Edman bespeaks much philosophic sympathy and respect. And, considering his own all-out loyalties to the philosophy of Naturalism,

this is significant, indeed.

There Are Many "Ways" Of Philosophy

In this more generous—not to mention, more sober—definition of Philosophy, we can surely find an honored place in Philosophy for the incisive religious-moral wisdom of the greatest of the Biblical prophets and sages of Israel. The latter, to be sure, were not philosophers in the classic, Greek sense of this term, namely, in the application of the logical formulae of reason toward an intellectual understanding of Nature. But they were unmistakably philosophers in that likewise significant "Way" of Philosophy as Mystical Insight. In that sense, the application of their thought to those ultimate mysteries of existence that are usually subsumed under the ever-challenging name of God, their thinking, as we will see in more detail as we go along, was of an eminent philosophic order. On these never-to-be-intellectually-solved mysteries of our universe, there was, philosophically, as I see it, only a difference of approach as between the Greek pro-religious philosophers and the prophets and sages of Israel. The former, by and large, came to their metaphysical *idea* of God by way of their extension of the same logical or rational method that they applied to their study of Nature—by way, in other words, of their Phys-

ics. The latter came to their *vision* of God by way of their deep insights into the moral nature of man. In the deep mysticism generated and nourished by the deeply-in-dwelling moral forces of the human soul, which mysteriously and irresistibly motivate man's conduct and destiny, the prophets and sages of Israel sought and found their penetrating mystically-philosophic *experience* or *awareness* of the Godhead.

The prophets and sages of Israel, let me note at once, were the last to disparage Nature, or the great usefulness of our rational faculty, or reason, in its beneficent function of seeking out a more exact knowledge of the forces of Nature. Nor would their religious-moral philosophy disparage the theoretic joys of abstract thought. Thus one of the usually conceded glories of Prophetic Religion is its "reasonableness," which last, of course, is not the same thing as "rationality." Indeed, the prophets and sages of Israel respected human reason. Their only contention on the subject, nay, their conviction—born of their deep mystical insights, which were generated and nourished by their heroic and selfless absorption in moral living—was that reason alone, thanks to its inherent limitations, is not incisive enough to reach out to, and to capture, an awareness of the Ultimate of Existence. The last, it was their conviction, can only

be *divined* by the deeper, immediate, intuitive insights of man's soul, of the validity of which they had no doubt, seeing that these insights came to them as spiritual experiences from the very depths of their own personalities.

Prophets As Philosophers In One Of The Significant "Ways" of Philosophy

And it was in this "Way" of philosophy as mystical insight that the prophets and sages of Israel made a significant contribution toward a philosophic basis for Theism. In this connection, suffice it to say for the present that their "Way" of Philosophy is properly known as *Ḥokmah*—Moral Wisdom—the philosophical-mystical insight that is involved in and that grows out of the depths and intensity of man's moral life.

That philosophy as mystical insight is a respectable and significant philosophy, I will have occasion later on to argue. That in some phase therein, philosophic support for one's theistic faith may be more effectively sought than in the rationalistic approach thereto that has been indulged in by theistic philosophers all along, is, to my mind, axiomatic. And significantly enough, the classic exponents of Theism—the great prophets and sages of Israel—sought and found therein potent philo-

sophic support for their faith.

A Promising Philosophical Approach?

You have, Dad, quite a tall but thought-challenging order here, observed Harold. This is quite a new angle on the subject, at least as far as I am concerned. If for no other reason than its novelty, this philosophic approach to Theism may, I would say, hold forth some unexpected promise. It deserves, at least, a respectful hearing.

Thanks, son, for this tentatively encouraging word. But now for my main task—a philosophic statement of the Prophetic religious position. If you will, then, hold off your fire for a while, I have hopes that you may find the following exposition not altogether dull.

CHAPTER THREE

ARISTOTLE SEEKS OUT THE PROPHET JEREMIAH IN THE ELYSIAN FIELDS

In accordance with my previous suggestion, son, that the most convincing statement of the essentials and philosophic justification of Prophetic faith would be one coming directly from the very mouths of the classic founders of that faith themselves, I propose to present it just that way. I plan, therefore, to have one of the Great Prophets himself interpret his faith for us. And in order to underline the uniqueness of the Prophetic approach to the God-idea—and particularly its radical differences from the classical-philosophic approach—I propose to have that prophet present his exposition in the philosophically-challenging presence of one of the chief representatives of the pro-religious Greek philosophers.

Dad, I am all ears, Harold enthusiastically

agreed. Surely, an interesting and most effective way for the job at hand!

Let us, then, imagine, I resumed, ancient Hellas' gift to the intellectual world, probably its greatest philosopher, Aristotle (fourth century B. C.E.), coming across ancient Judea's gift to the religious-moral world, probably its greatest prophet, Jeremiah (seventh to sixth centuries, B.C.E.), in the quiet lanes of the mythical Elysian Fields,—whither, I dare say, neither of them, but for different reasons, ever imagined himself, during his earthly existence, to be transported. Let us further imagine these transfigured personalities, in their new post-earthly existence, to be possessed of the knowledge of both the historic past and the historic future known to us today. At least of the knowledge of those things that have happened before and after their individual earthly existences that might be of special interest to them, as well as to us, touching the subject of our present discussion.

Having thus made liberal use of our highly useful imaginative gift, let us, finally, imagine the philosopher Aristotle, good naturedly and respectfully, inquiringly addressing the prophet Jeremiah as follows:

Reverend Sir, I understand that during your heroic earthly pilgrimage as the Man of Sorrows and Contention, you and your great prophetic colleagues

have evolved quite a vital and philosophically respectable conception of God and the good life, although so different from my own, as well as from that of my Hellenic philosophic colleagues. Indeed (this with tongue in cheek), you have—*mirabile dictu*—achieved this great feat without the benefit of my Philosophy, nay, even without the benefit of the less perfect philosophy of my distinguished teacher, Plato!

Humility On The Part Of Philosophers Possible—In The Elysian Fields

How sinfully certain, reverend sir, weren't we all in our earthly existence, we ancient philosophers—and, alas, I note, most of the "moderns," too—that our respective philosophies were no less than exact transcripts of Reality! Had we been wiser, would we not have, in more becoming humility, rather considered our individual philosophies as but more or less well thought-out private perspectives, or visions, of that fathomless and ever-mysterious public domain of our Universe, as one "modern" has perceptively put it?[4]

In this more philosophically sober mood, I have sought you out here, reverend sir, in order to obtain from you a much desired first-hand statement, as it were, of your Prophetic faith. And only such a statement, you will no doubt agree, is of real

value on such a profoundly personal matter as one's religion.

I feel certain, reverend sir, that your hoped-for exposition of your religious philosophy will have eminently justified my decision to pull myself away for a spell from my exclusive occupation here of Philosophic Contemplation. In such contemplation, reverend sir, I am now pleased to engage undisturbed, thanks to the fortunate absence in these quiet Elysian Fields of the many mortal distractions of earthly life, such, for instance, as my assignment with my troublesome Boy Prodigy, Alexander. This peculiar practice of mine, in which, as I have just intimated, I have already indulged during the very rare leisure moments of my earthly career, follows, as you have probably learned here, the dictates of my Metaphysics. According to the latter, Philosophic Contemplation is the supreme means at the disposal of man whereby he can identify himself with God, or the Reason of Universe. Indeed, such contemplation is our supreme act of *Imitatio Dei,* seeing that, according to my Metaphysics, God's own sole occupation is Self-Contemplation—Thought Thinking Itself.

A knowing, but good-natured smile, with which Aristotle was, however, not at all displeased, lighted up the furrowed, brooding countenance of Jeremiah.

Aristotle Seeks Philosophic Implications Of Prophetic Faith

As a philosopher, Aristotle continued, I am very interested to learn from you, both the essence of and the philosophic justification for your God-conception. Particularly the latter, seeing, as I have learned here, that for one good reason or another —which, too, I trust you may reveal—you and your prophetic colleagues have not taken the trouble to leave for posterity such a philosophic statement of your God-conception. Having heard here of the just fame of your Prophetic wisdom, I, as a philosopher, of course realize that though such an organized philosophic explanation, justifying your God-conception, is not found in your Prophetic writings, it is fully implied in them. It is these philosophic implications of your God-conception, reverend sir, that I much desire to draw out of you—for their possible philosophic import.

I have an uncanny feeling, touching the philosophic import that I sense in your Prophetic faith, that I might be disposed here to take a more serious account of it than during my earthly career,—entirely pre-occupied as I was then with our novel and justly famous Hellenic Experiment of Reason in Search of an Understanding of Nature. As you no doubt surmise, I do have an inkling of the underlying philosophy of your Prophetic approach to

the God-idea, knowing, of course, as I do, the philosophic implications of religious faith generally. However, from the little that I have heard here, your Prophetic God-idea has a philosophic slant originally its own. And it is just this that I am anxious to hear, first-hand, from your reverend self—its pre-eminent exponent.

In our present existence, as I suggested before, we are indeed beyond the human limitations of envy and the *idée fixe* of omniscience, which, alas, has led to the foolhardy conclusion on the part of most philosophers of all ages that their individual philosophic systems are the final word—no less—on the subject of this forever plaguingly mysterious universe of ours. At least here, we truly realize the *whole* truth of the very wise thesis of the Immortal Bard, which is, in sum, that there are more things in heaven and earth than are contained in all our philosophies.

What Also Intrigues Aristotle Re Prophetic Faith

May I add, reverend sir, that the career, too, of your Prophetic faith intrigues me. I mean its remarkable persistence among men. Yes, even in the modern highly critical and sceptical days. I note that not a few of the religiously-disposed learned have been quite busy of late fashioning more ra-

tionally or "scientifically" appealing Designs for Divinity. Some of these, I must confess, even I fail to recognize as my distinctively rational own! But I note, too, that also not a few of the modern learned still continue to find your God-conception more meaningful, nay, even more philosophically valid, than my own or than those formed in its image. And this, notwithstanding the significant fact that they admittedly find it almost impossible to justify such a stand by the time-honored rational standards!

As for the persistent preference for your Prophetic faith on the part of the great majority of Western mankind over rationally more easily-held faiths, the old explanation therefor, that would have satisfied me during my earthly all-rational career—namely, that the masses of mankind are not philosophers—that explanation somehow fails to fully convince me here. As a philosopher—but with my philosophic vision no longer limited to my aforementioned rational interests—I now find that even after allowing for the unphilosophic habits of the masses of even civilized mankind, I must still credit them with that basic human wisdom which is theirs, no less,—you would, perhaps, say in certain instances, even more!—than the philosophers'. Yes, I have in mind that basic human wisdom that gives us all the insight to intuitively sense the enduring values of things and doctrines.

Perhaps, then, a convincing witness to this truth is the very intriguing fact of this almost universal persistence of your Prophetic faith. And I know none better than your eminent self who can shed light on this phenomenon, too. For does not this odd fact beg for the insight of the prophet rather than the mere logical analysis of the classic philosopher?

I trust, then, reverend sir, that this explanation of my desire to hear an exposition of the Prophetic faith from the mouth of him who belongs to the classic fraternity of those who not only founded and thought through that faith, but who, above all, nobly lived by it, may justify my rude disturbance of your serenity in these quiet Elysian Fields.

Permit me to add just this, reverend sir, I come rather to be enlightened than enter into disputation touching the essence of your cosmic vision. The Greek pro-religious philosophers'—and their later disciples'—views on this subject are well known. These have been, I fear, *over*-argued. Your own Prophetic philosophic position on this eternally intriguing matter, I have an eerie feeling here, has not as yet been authoritatively and clearly brought forward. And it, no doubt, deserves a respectful hearing. Such a hearing, reverend sir, I am now prepared to give it, prompted, as I am, by our deeper wisdom here bearing upon the value of all thoughtful insights which may give

us a fuller vision of the Ultimate. With your permission, however, I will not deny myself the privilege of here and there briefly breaking into your eagerly awaited exposition with an observation that I may deem pertinent, or that, above all, may help me in effectively drawing out of your Prophetic self those philosophic implications of your Prophetic vision which I am groping for. As a good Hellene, may I add, that these interruptions of mine may also lend a little dramatic verve to our exchanges here for the benefit of the mortals below, whom these Elysian transactions may somehow reach. Those moderns, having been spoiled by our Hellenic dramatic traditions, appear to insist on even their philosophy and religion being served up to them with a dash of dramatic flavor!

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH'S EXPOSITION OF PROPHETIC FAITH

Praise For The Greeks From A Hebrew Prophet!

To all which, we can further imagine the prophet Jeremiah replying as follows:

Eminent sir, our chance meeting here in these pleasant Elysian Fields, I find both a pleasure and an honor. You and your philosophic colleagues of ancient and great Hellas have performed, from our prophetic viewpoint, one great good, among many others, namely, un-deifying Nature.

From the viewpoint of our Hebraic religious-moral philosophy, the ancient universal practice of deifying the forces of Nature—whatever understandable psychologic reason there was for it in ancient times—resulted in many moral and intellectual

evils, well known to you. That universal evil inclination of ancient man, in addition to terrorizing and confusing his mind and conduct, prevented him from doing the one sane and helpful thing about Nature. I mean, to accept it, at worst, as a neutral base of operations for man's needs and values, as, I understand, the twentieth century non- or anti-theistic philosophers of Naturalism are doing. Or, at best, as in our own prophetic conception—wherein Nature is conceived as the expression of the creative powers of a beneficent God—to accept it as a potentially friendly field for man's operations. Nay, as something that man can and should *dominate,* even as he does his own body, in behalf of his higher spiritual interests.

A Significant Word On Nature: "—And Conquer It!"

This is the significant, helpful faith that is embedded in the sage statement of the Priestly author of the first chapter of our Bible:

> And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, *and conquer it.* (Gen. 1.27-28.)

Need I, in passing, observe, eminent sir, that I

am confident that in your capacity as a philosopher, you will not allow the simple anthropomorphism of the language of this or other passages of our Bible, which I may have occasion to cite, to prejudice you against the precious wisdom embodied in their ancient mythical or poetic diction.

Fortified, then, with this sober faith, man need not *fear* Nature. Much less, *worship* it, as, I sadly note, even some modern over-enthusiastic philosophic Naturalists are almost prepared to advocate —a rank blasphemy, indeed, to our God, Who is conceived as its ultimate Author—but to *use* it, nay, *dominate* it for his own human interests. This faith, incidentally, also fortifies man with the conviction that he is endowed with the capacity of dominating it for his higher interests, notwithstanding the almost superhuman and constantly discouraging labors such conquest entails. And it is because our Priestly sage was possessed of the faith that man was endowed with the moral and intellectual capacities to wisely dominate Nature, that he felt justified in declaring, in the name of his God, the great challenging assurance to the spirit of man:—

> God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good! (Gen. 1.31.)

If God found Creation good—our sage challengingly implies—man can, too! Indeed, man can also find it good, if he but be imbued with the faith

that its Divine Author has so constituted Nature as to afford man the needed opportunities for his noblest ambitions; and if, in accordance with this faith, he makes wise and heroic use of those God-given opportunities. This lifting assurance to the spirit of man is again inspiringly contained in the following ever-refreshing, eminently this-worldly declaration of our prophetic Deuteronomist, wherein he assures man that Religion's "Word" or message, whose supreme aim, when soberly understood, is to enable man to find Life good, is "not too hard for thee, neither is it far off":—

> For this Commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say: 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say: 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?' *But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.* (Deut. 30.11-14.)

The Liberating Hebraic Note— An Emphatic "Aye" To Life And The World

Our challenging declaration, "—and behold, it

was very good," very emphatically, then, announces the liberating Hebraic faith in the essential goodness and worth of this world and its life. It announces, in other words, the Prophetic disavowal of the soul-paralyzing philosophy of pessimism with its disparagement of the visible world and its life. Our disavowal of this philosophy is for us categoric. And no matter in what guise it may appear. Whether it be couched in the pantheistic terms of Buddhist philosophy, or in the theistic, other-wordly terms of primitive Christianity, or in the non- or anti-theistic phraseology of some of the versions of the latter-day philosophic Naturalism. Our Prophetic faith categorically disowns all the varieties of *Nein-sagen* to, or repudiation of, this earthly and visible life of ours. This life of ours, we are not blind to the fact, is, by and large, a hard one, burdened as it is with endless travail and insoluble problems—especially for the men and women of sacrificial integrity. Since, however, it furnishes man with the God-given opportunities for moral and intellectual growth and grandeur, it is "good," it is worthy, it is worthwhile! And woe to him, who, for whatever specious reasons, chooses to disparage it! That this liberating doctrine of world- and life-affirmation directly follows from, and is one of the chief glories of, our Prophetic conception of God, will, I believe, become evident as we go along.

Greek And Hebrew, Fellows In Spirit

Because, then, of our common championing of the aforementioned great ideas, Greek and Hebrew have historically revealed themselves as fellows in spirit.

May I, then, eminent sir, representing as I do my Prophetic fraternity, who, on religious grounds, were first effectively to combat man's vicious, ancient and universal tendency to deify Nature, hail you as a fellow in spirit! With much pleasure, indeed, as I noted earlier, I have learned here of the effective philosophic support we Prophets have received on this very important subject from your eminent self and from your philosophic colleagues. While couched in philosophic, rather than in religious terminology, your teaching on the subject, as I see it, was, in effect, the same: Nature is not God. It is, therefore, irrational to worship it. Nature is rather to be studied by man, in order that he may learn its character, its ways of working—its laws. By virtue of man's application of his precious gift of reason, man may achieve the wisdom and the power to control Nature for his highest good and happiness.

Again, your philosophically sober and hopeful attitude toward life has enabled you and your philosophic colleagues to join the ranks of my Prophetic company of *Ja-sagers* to, or believers

in, life. Touching this idea, too, I can thus hail you once more as a fellow in spirit. This is philosophic wisdom, indeed! For what doth it profit man to wilfully disparage, and deny himself, the only life he knows, if with sufficient moral and intellectual effort—and (I should like to add) a modicum of Prophetic faith—he may, despite all its travail, make it yield him self-realization and that precious sense of spiritual fulfillment that flows therefrom?

The Prophet's Praise Girds The Philosopher For The Worst!

Such praise for the Greeks, my dear Jeremiah, touching such eminent ideas, and from a Hebrew Prophet, guardedly exclaimed Aristotle, is praise indeed! Knowing the nature of the Prophet, however, I fear that blame cannot be far behind,—and bearing upon even more serious matters! On the good principle, however, that one good turn deserves another, let me, then, my dear Jeremiah, put you at ease before you begin your *Jeremiad*, by assuring you at once that your initial comradely praise will materially make lighter for me the pain of your impending prophetic shafts.

If all men were philosophers, my dear Aristotle, observed Jeremiah with much feeling, how much lighter, indeed, might the Prophet's burden be!

I am grateful to you, no end, for this thoughtful lightening of my present task.

But, As Prophets Always Will,
Jeremiah Soon Takes Issue—

You have correctly noted, I recall, Jeremiah continued, that our Prophetic God-conception differs a good deal from your own. During my sojourn here, I have become acquainted—only, of course, as an interested layman on the subject—with your philosophy, and particularly with your God-conception, which inevitably grows out therefrom. As to the latter, I can, incidentally, return your compliment. I, too, find your highly philosophic God-conception a very exalted one. A far cry, indeed, from the countless Nature-gods of your people, against which you and your philosophic colleagues have so valiantly arrayed yourselves! Having said this, let me hasten to add that I cannot help but find your highly intellectualized God—a fair model, by and large, of the philosopher's God of all later times—unconscionably *too* exalted! Too exalted, that is, to be of any vital use to mankind.

—With The Philosopher's God-Conception

A God, who is merely a Rational First Cause, a

God, moreover, whose sole preoccupation is Self-Contemplation—Thought Thinking Itself (how prone I am to weep over that utterly impersonal *It* of that *Itself*!), a God who chooses to exist in blessed unconcern with our entire "sub-lunar" world,—such a God, I cannot fail to consider, from our Prophetic viewpoint, as too exalted, indeed, to be of any earthly use, comfort or moral motivation to that struggling, doubting, sinning, aspiring race of man.

A Reflection Of The Greek Aristocratic Spirit

Your highly-intellectualized God-conception, it seems to me, is but a philosophically sublimated outgrowth of the grosser religious belief of your people, who imagined their Olympian Gods as living care-free lives in the Olympian clouds, in utter unconcern with the life and struggles of the inferior mortals below. This, to us very strange conception of your people, I sense, was a direct result of its deep-rooted aristocratic character. This notoriously aristocratic snobbishness of your people, I recall, asserted itself in many ways. Shall I mention your people's practice—equally true, alas, of even your philosophers—of looking upon all non-Hellenes as barbarians? Shall I allude to the fact that you, yourself, as philosopher and ethicist, felt it perfectly proper to go out of your way to justify

the ancient iniquitous institution of slavery, something that was unthinkable to the deep moral sense of our prophets. Shall I instance, further, your people's hatred and depreciation of manual labor, which you chose to relegate to your slaves? Our own sages, by the way, praised labor highly, and were not ashamed to indulge in it themselves. This depreciatory attitude of your people—especially of your intellectuals—toward manual labor, I sadly recall, was one of the important reasons why your natural science failed to make the headway that was later made by the moderns. The latter, thanks to their refusal to indulge in such aristocratic prejudices, succeeded in inventing those wonderful mechanical gadgets which enabled them to achieve their more fruitful observations of and experimentations with the phenomena of nature. This aristocratic attitude of your people toward life in general is also, I note with great regret, writ large in your own *Ethics*. Need I remind you of your aristocratic characterization therein of your "high-minded man"—your Greek Superman—who, among other aristocratic prejudices, "holds nothing to be of very great importance"?

From my present perspective, I must sadly admit, my friend Jeremiah, that you have mordantly, though sympathetically, touched here on a regrettably weak and costly quirk in the Greek character. And one's weaknesses, I suppose, will obtrude

themselves in most unexpected places!

A Religious Monstrosity

To be sure, my dear Aristotle, as a result of these ingrained aristocratic prejudices of your people, it was but natural for its philosophers, including your eminent self, to envisage their God as a Super-Aristocrat. It was but natural, I say, for you to so aristocratically exalt your God as to remove him entirely from the common turbulence of the work-a-day world, and even from the morally significant transactions of the great human drama. It was but natural for you to turn your God into a sort of a Closet Super-Philosopher. In brief, into such an abstract Metaphysical IT as to make that IT entirely useless to man morally!

To my own people, on the other hand, with our ancient, deep-seated, democratic sense, and our supreme convictions of the transcendent worth of human personality, such an aristocratic God-conception were unthinkable! To us prophets, who have been but the spokesmen of the fundamentally democratic spirit of our people, man—physically puny though he is in the infinite ensemble of Nature, and spiritually even more insignificant as compared with what we conceive to be the ineffable holiness of God—man, thanks to his God-given moral endowment, could not but be con-

sidered as of transcendent importance in the Divine cosmic scheme of things. Such being our conception of Man, we could not but look upon a God-conception that chooses to describe God as blissfully unconcerned with the entire mundane drama of that only creature with rational and moral aspirations in the entire "sub-lunar" world as no less than a religious monstrosity! And I am even tempted to ask, eminent sir—though Philosophy in the classic Greek sense of the term is not my province—whether such a God-conception is not equally a philosophic monstrosity. Limiting God to Reason, as you do, has, indeed, in our Prophetic conception, its fatal religious shortcomings. But need Reason—even with a capital "R"—go to such aristocratically impersonal extremes?

The Philosophers' Bugaboo Of Anthropomorphism

There is still another, somewhat related, enlightening explanation, as I see it, for your particularly impersonal God-conception, so distasteful to us, prophets. I refer to the philosophers' unearthly dread of anthropomorphism. You and other philosophers, who posit the existence of a God, have chosen to make His existence more rationally palatable by making him less and less human—less and less Personality. You have, in other

words, imputed to God an aristocratic aloofness from the world of Man, even, alas, from man's reflective moral values and aspirations, such as the triumph of justice, which are so important to the elect of men, and which admittedly are among the few attributes of man that lift him above the amoral status of brute Nature. And all this, you have gone out of your way to do because, by such depersonalization of your God, you have satisfied yourself into believing that you have made more philosophically tenable your own conception of God as Reason!

But Has Not Anthropomorphism Philosophical Company?

But, I soberly ask, this Reason, which you have dialectically raised to the *n'th* power, and called it God, is it not also, as far as we really know, a very human quality? By your deification of reason, then, may you not also, in a significant sense, be accused of anthropomorphizing God? Indeed, even as we prophets have been accused of and abused for doing by the Spinozas of the world because of our identification of God with Justice and Righteousness! Because, in other words, we have deified man's other supreme endowment—his deep-rooted moral nature, his "moral law within"—which, according to your own teaching, incidentally, is also

a sort of reason—a moral reason.

Your likely protest in this connection that to identify God with Reason is not to commit as great an anthropomorphism as the identification of Him with Morality, is hardly convincing. For even if one should concede that yours is the lesser sort of anthropomorphism, it remains anthropomorphism nevertheless.

To apply a light Hellenic touch to your objection here, jovially observed Aristotle, this, in your view, amounts to saying: Why blame poor Socrates for being henpecked? Aren't we all, more or less? I expect to make some pertinent comment on this thoughtful point of yours, my dear Jeremiah. I will, however, defer the same for a little later on, sensing, as I do, that you have much more to say on this subject.

You have sensed correctly, my dear Aristotle. Indeed, the only difference between your position and ours is that while you apparently refuse to recognize this "guilt" on your part, we prophets readily admit it. Nay, we believe that such anthropomorphism can be philosophically justified, as I shall try to show when I repair to the specific philosophic task which you have assigned me. Be that as it may for the present. As prophets, profoundly appreciating, as we do, that God means nothing significant to man except as Moral Personality, we have allowed in our God-conception that sublimated form of an-

thropomorphism—or *humaneness*—which imputes to God those distinctly human qualities that distinguish man from the brute, and which we call Divine. I refer, of course, to reason and morality, but not over-looking morality. We have, however, at the same time, sternly and meticulously, eliminated from our God-conception that grosser sort of anthropomorphism which would impute to God those *merely* human characteristics—either of body or of mind—which would degrade God to that level of man that makes him indistinguishable from inanimate and brute Nature. Indeed, we have even refrained from imputing to man at his most perceptive and most moral stature, *equality* with God. At his most exalted spiritual height, man, in our Prophetic view, still remains but finitude in relation to God's ineffable Infinitude.

The Prophets Fully De-anthropomorphized Their God-conception

How scrupulously we Prophets have de-anthropomorphized our God-conception in the sense just indicated, those who are familiar with our utterances are well aware.

Though God has made man "but a little less than God" (Ps. 8.6), as our psalmist felicitously put it, we have soberly pointed up—and in no un-

certain terms—the unfathomable differences between God and man. We have distinguished God from man by insisting on God's incorporeality or spirituality, on His omniscience as opposed to the finiteness of man's knowledge—even of that of the greatest of our prophets. In contradistinction to the mortality of man, we have taught, touching God:—

> I am first, I am also the last! (Isa. 44.6.)

Our prophetic insistence on the infinite gulf between God and man is particularly evident in our conception of the ineffableness of God's Holiness, which, let me note, in the conception of all our Great Prophets means *moral* holiness. The saintly prophet, Isaiah, in his Consecration Vision, mystically standing in the presence of the "thrice-holy God," declares himself to be but "a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6.5). It is such Holiness, I may add in passing, that, in our view, fittingly compels worship, adoration, and *Imitatio Dei* on the part of man. We have, furthermore, insisted that the ultimate principle by which God operates His cosmic economy is infinitely different from man's reasoning thereon:—

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
> Neither are your ways My ways, saith the
> Lord;
> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts!
(Isa. 55.8-9.)

Even God's Justice, so fundamental to our God-conception, as justice is in our Ethics,[5] is beyond the human understanding of this term. This idea was profoundly and eloquently elaborated by the author of our Biblical Book of Job, in connection with his religiously inspiring treatment of the Problem of the Suffering of the Righteous. On this I shall dwell before long.

Note how far we have carried our de-anthropomorphization of our Prophetic God-conception—to the extent, that is, of insisting on the utter unknowableness of God's ultimate ways of functioning in the universe, or His cosmic purposes. In fact, we claimed less knowledge of these Divine ultimates than those anti-theistic rationalists, who attempted to belittle our God-conception because of the philosophically-dreaded anthropomorphism implied in our attributing to God such moral attributes, or ways of His functioning, as Justice and Righteousness and Love and Holiness. Yet these deriders of our moral God-conception, ironically enough, apodictically describe *their* God's attributes as Body and Mind,—with an infinite number of other inconceivable attributes thrown in as a sop, per chance, to Tradition! We have never presumed

to describe God's ways of operation in the Universe as *more geometrico*! Nor have we permitted ourselves to become anthropomorphic enough to limit God's freedom, just because the human laws of mathematical reason would not permit God to be free!

—But Refused To De-humanize God

It is evident, then, how far we prophets have gone in the matter of the purification of our God-conception from all such anthropomorphism as would lower God to the level of man, in the latter's capacity as an integral part of Nature or as a creature of finitude. Nevertheless, we have not allowed ourselves, thanks to our sound human insights, to become so overwhelmed by the philosophers' bugaboo of anthropomorphism—such was the case with your philosophical self and with the Sage of Amsterdam—as completely to de-humanize and de-personalize your God-conception and so make it practically meaningless and useless to man in the tasks and struggles of his everyday life. In this, I am convinced, lies the unique philosophic sobriety and social effectiveness of our God-conception. To deny to God the eminently human or humane character of Moral Personality, to make of Him an Aristocratic Stranger to man and to his en-

tire historic drama, as in your case, or to reduce Him to a mere Logical Term, as the Sage of Amsterdam has done, out of philosophic fear of derogating from His Divine Majesty, is, as I have already observed, a religious, if not a philosophic absurdity!

"He Giveth Power To The Faint—"

Of such absurdity, we prophets chose, for many worthy reasons, not to be guilty. Thus the great Deutero-Isaiah—the so-called Theologian among our Great Prophets—who has labored effectively to de-anthropomorphize our God-conception, the very one, in fact, who has eloquently insisted on God's utter spirituality and infinitude, nevertheless —and in the same breath, as it were—could declare:

> He giveth power to the faint;
> And to him that hath no might He increaseth strength . . .
> But they that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
> They shall mount up with wings as eagles;
> They shall run, and not be weary;
> They shall walk, and not faint. (Isa. 40.29,31.)

In your God-conception, eminent sir, as I see it, you remain anthropomorphic enough, as I have already indicated, to deify human reason. We chose to remain anthropomorphic enough to deify hu-

man justice or morality. And the philosophic explanation for this significant difference, I venture to state, is the more vital interest in justice and morality on the part of the chief spokesmen of our people—its prophets—as compared with that of the chief intellectual spokesmen of your people—its philosophers.

Why Greek And Hebrew God-Conceptions Differ

With your philosophers, justice or morality, was, by and large, regarded as an admirable social phenomenon that could be dialectically reasoned out, or as some rationally arrived-at Golden Mean that the wise man is to accept as a means for promoting his individual happiness. A mere matter of prudence, in other words, or what some of your modern disciples call utilitarianism. Deferring for later exposition the deep mystical implications that justice had for our prophets and confining myself at present to the profound moral meaning that it had for us, I would note that justice meant to us rather a consuming passion, an inescapable duty, something so absolute and transcendent as to demand of *our* "high-minded man" that he be prepared even to sacrifice his individual happiness for its preservation or advancement. With us, it demanded, in brief, even martyrdom. To prove to you the significant truth of this statement, may I

cite the evidence therefor in my own Consecration Vision?—

And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying:

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee,
And before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee;
I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I: 'Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child.' But the Lord said unto me:

Say not: I am a child;
For to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go,
And whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.
Be not afraid of them;
For I am with thee to deliver thee,
Saith the Lord.

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and the Lord said unto me:

Behold I have put My words in thy mouth;
See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms,
To root out and to pull down,
And to destroy and to overthrow;
To build, and to plant. (Jer. 1.4-10.)

Justice Or Morality, The Prophets' Consuming Passion

And it was with no less than such a back-breaking and life-endangering sense of duty that I went forth to deliver my Temple Sermon, at the very gates of the Temple, there to castigate the princes and rulers of my people for their disenfranchisement of the masses of their people of their God-given inheritance. To them I felt called upon to declare that they have converted God's Temple into a "den of robbers!" And them I felt constrained to warn that if they chose not to amend their ways and establish justice and equity in the land, the God of Justice will not hesitate to destroy their holy Temple at Jerusalem, upon the inviolability of which they so foolishly depended, even as He had caused to destroy my people's earlier shrine at Shiloh:—

> "And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Abraham." (Jer. 7.1-15.)

To effect this mission of social justice and moral reformation, I was ready to, and did, go down into the Pit, and become the traditional Man of Sorrows and Contention. Nor was I the first, nor the last of my prophetic colleagues to undertake this martyrizing burden in behalf of justice and the right.

The Prophets' Saga Of Heroic Courage

In further illustration of this fact, I need only refer to our first lawgiver's heroic demand of Pharaoh to "Let my people go!" (Ex. 6.1); to the prophet Nathan's pointing his accusing finger at the powerful King David, in the matter of Uriah and Bethsheba, with the immortal words: "Thou art the man!" (I Sam. 12.2); to the prophet Elijah's castigation of King Ahab concerning the latter's high-handed confiscation of the vineyard of Citizen Naboth: "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" (I Kings, 21.19), and to the prophet Amos' fearless appearance at the royal sanctuary at Bethel, in the presence of the royal priest, Amaziah, to pronounce the doom upon the apparently prosperous Kingdom of Jereboam II, whose ruling classes "trampled upon the poor" and "turned justice to gall and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood" (Amos 6.12). No wonder, the royal priest Amaziah hastened to inform his King: "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words!" (ib. 7.10.) Need I cite more of our well-known prophetic annals to the same effect?

God As Justice—A Reflection Of The Prophets' Unique Moral Passion

And because our moral sense was so deep-rooted

and categorical in us, it was natural, nay, inevitable, that morality or justice should be so important to us as to be regarded by us as the most essential Reality of the universe. Hence, our prophetic vision of that Reality, or God, as Morality, Justice, or Righteousness. Or, as a latter-day Christian student of Hebraism has felicitously characterized our God as "the Power not-ourselves that makes for righteousness." Or, as He has been described by other moderns: the God of History.

The Moral Dynamism Of The Prophets' God-conception

Deferring for a moment the question of the philosophic justification of this God-conception of ours, may I call your attention here to one—others will become evident as we proceed—of its tremendous meanings to man, which is so lamentably lacking in your God-conception. I have in mind, of course, its *moral dynamism.*

Our conception of God as Justice has brought God down from the philosophic clouds and into the struggling moral life of man. Instead of the Aristocratic Philosophic Stranger to the "sub-lunar" human drama, as you envision Him, He becomes, in our Prophetic conception, the God of History or the God of Justice, and, as such, He is supremely concerned in the triumph of Justice on earth.

Imbued with the faith in such a God, our Priestly writer, for instance, could meaningfully addresss to his God the daring query,—

> Will the Ruler of the whole earth
> fail to do justice?
> (Gen. 18.25.)

He could, in other words, be fortified with the staying conviction that he is living in a potentially morally decent world, seeing that, by virtue of His very moral nature, the Ruler of the whole earth is Himself bounden to conduct His cosmic economy by Moral Law. Profoundly believing in such a God, an Isaiah, again, could effectively warn the evil doers who chose to stand in Justice's way,—

> I made justice the measuring line,
> And righteousness the plummet (Isa. 28.17)

of the world! In other words, obey the moral law, or perish! There is no escaping it! For Justice is the very law of the Universe! For this very reason, has our God of Justice been a standing and potent warning throughout the ages to the human forces of evil. And the evil doers of every generation have frequently, however reluctantly, heard Him! For the same reason has our Prophetic faith in this God of Justice fortified all the heroic battlers for Justice throughout the ages with the dynamic confidence that they were not *alone* in their sacrificial struggles—that behind their moral battles

there was always that Power not-ourselves that maketh for righteousness!

The Laughing Philosopher

Whether History can fully establish the existence of such a God of Justice, is another story. But by the same token, can your own scientific observations of Nature prove that there is a Reason at the heart of things, and that that is God? Your own Laughing Philosopher was entirely philosophically satisfied, as you know, to substitute his Mechanical Atom for your august Cosmic Reason as a complete explanation of the entire cosmic drama. (Was that surname, perchance, given to him for the reason that he was in the habit, in his truly serious moments, of privately laughing uproariously at his own brash, dogmatic materialism?) Yes, your "Laughing" Democritus, I am sure, would deride your deification of human reason as a gross "Pathetic Fallacy," even as you, I dare say, are disposed to disparage as such our Prophetic identification of God with Justice.

The Philosopher Is Intrigued— But Makes A Fine Point

I find philosophically intriguing, indeed, my dear Jeremiah, your very thoughtful proposition of

tracing back the causes of the differences of the Hebrew and Greek God-conceptions to the fundamental differences in the character of our two peoples. This, indeed, is a philosophically enlightening approach to our subject. For by such uncovering of the elemental sources of our respective visions of the Ultimate, we are led to acquire a very useful bit of humility concerning their ultimate value. We learn, in other words, that the initial driving forces of both our world-views are, in a significant sense, quite human; that mine, for instance, may not at all possess absolute cosmic validity; that, as I have already admitted in my opening remarks, each thoughful point of view of our universe may be possessed of some philosophic validity, and each may contribute its bit to the sum-total of our ultimate, humanly-circumscribed vision of what we call Ultimate Reality.

The exalted meaning, which you have just so nobly revealed, that Morality has had for your people's Prophetic spokesmen, is an inspiring one indeed. We, classical Greek philosophers, with our essentially Greek, intellectualist, conception of it, as a sort of glorified Prudence, could never match it. That this more serious and more meaningful attitude of your prophets toward morality, as compared to our Hellenic, more easy-going attitude explains your Prophetic God-conception as Moral Personality, I must of course concede.

After having conceded all the foregoing, and particularly your thesis of the ultimately anthropomorphic origins of both our God-conceptions, there still remains, however, your aforementioned tacit admission that our Greek God-conception as Reason is, to some extent, less anthropomorphic than your Prophetic God-conception as Moral Personality, and that to that extent *is* more rationally tenable. Notwithstanding our Laughing Philosopher's brash insistence on the Mechanical Atom as a complete explanation of the Cosmic Drama, you, for one, I am sure, would agree with me that our human reason, as it soberly scans the natural scene, has grounds to suspect—if it cannot logically prove—that there *may* be some sort of Reason to explain that so-called Cosmic Mechanism. Our reason, however, finds no such suspicious evidence of a Moral Personality—as much as it would perhaps love to have such a Personality actually exist. Granted, then, that we pro-religious philosophers are also guilty of that "Pathetic Fallacy" against which you will soon no doubt do prophetic battle, is not *our* "fallacy" in this matter substantially less "pathetic" —and, to that extent, therefore, more in harmony with reason than that "fallacy" of your Prophets?

This difference in the anthropomorphic character of our God-conceptions, my dear Jeremiah, no matter how slight in your estimation, also has an important practical aspect. Those who, like myself,

conceive of God as a sort of impersonal Reason, stoically refrain from what, I note, the moderns wisely call "wishful-thinking" on this subject. They do not expect the rationally impossible from the universe, and are therefore less likely to be duped or disillusioned by those far-flung hopes which the devotees of your Prophetic faith build on your Prophetic conception of God as Moral Personality.

The Prophet Approaches His Philosophic Task Via A Perceptive Biblical Passage

Let me thank you, my dear Aristotle, for faithfully following your promise to help me in tapping the philosophic implications of our Prophetic Faith. Your last rational exceptions to my thesis have challengingly indeed, but helpfully, opened wide before me the philosophic vistas of my Argument.

Being a mere prophet, and, as such, not adept in Greek philosophic argumentation, I will have to attempt to satisfy you, my dear Aristotle, in my own—what you will, no doubt, characterize as—philosophically rambling way. I trust, however, that you will find that way not entirely unsatisfactory or uninteresting.

And as a good introduction to our Prophetic Argument, permit me to expound a very perceptive poetic passage, found in the second book of

our Bible, which contains what our people down the ages have called the Thirteen *Middot,* or Thirteen Moral Attributes of God, or more correctly, the Thirteen "Ways" of Mercy by which God, as known to man, rules the world.[6]

There we are poetically told that Moses, our people's lawgiver, liberator, and, traditionally, the greatest of our Prophets—in brief, the one mortal who was spiritually closest to God—asked God, in order that it shall be known that "I have found grace in Thy Sight, I and Thy people":—"Show Me, I pray Thee, Thy Glory." To which request of Moses, God replied: "Thou canst not see My face, for man shall not see Me and live." Moses' plea, however, did not remain entirely unsatisfied. For God proceeded to tell Moses:

> Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock. And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock and will cover thee with My hand until I have passed by. And I will take away My hand and thou shalt see My back; but My face shall not be seen . . .

The Biblical writer, finally, relates:

> And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy unto the

thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty . . ."

(Ex. 33.16-23; 34.6-7.)

What Is "Seen" "While My Glory Passeth By—"

The idea, here, eminent sir, is obvious, and very pertinent to the subject under consideration. The ultimate nature of God must remain an ineffable mystery to man. The finitude of man's reason makes this forever impossible, even to the most perceptive of men. Man is enabled, however, by virtue of his moral nature and moral life, to "see" God's "back"—that phase of Him which makes man akin to God, namely, God's moral "Attributes"—that part of His "Glory" by which He functions in the life of Man—in History, in the unfolding human drama.

The Prophetic Moral Argument

In the history of Philosophy, one would, I believe, identify, more or less, our philosophic justification of our vision of God as the so-called Moral Argument. In modern philosophy, as I have learned here, this Argument has received great popularity through the eminent German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Our Moral Argument,

however, differs a great deal from Kant's. It is not tied up, as Kant's is, with his Transcendental metaphysics, and is for that reason perhaps more "convincing," to those who are not constitutionally wedded to scepticism on the subject of religious faith. Our Moral Argument should, in fact, more fully be described, as we shall see as we go along, as the Prophetic Moral Argument, or the Moral-Mystic Argument. The mystic phase of our argument, as I have learned here is foreign to Kant's Metaphysics, and consequently to his Moral Argument for the existence of God. And for this reason, in our view, his philosophic plea for the theistic thesis is neither convincing to the sceptic, nor satisfactory enough to the religious sense of the prophetic religionist.

Upon due reflection on the subject, I would say that our feeling of certainty in a moral God derives immediately, not from our reasoning upon Nature as a whole, or from the examination of the nature of things in general, as I understand was, in the main, the method of your nation's philosphers. That certainty of ours rather stems from that which is nearest to Man, namely, from man himself, or, more specifically, from man's moral compulsions which we experience in our active and reflective moral life.

In graphic illustration of this fact, I can do no better than begin by citing the very revealing po-

etic passage of a late prophetic writer, found in our Biblical Book of Kings. This writer describes an experience of one of my distinguished prophetic predecessors, the prophet Elijah, who has become a beloved legendary figure in later Jewish tradition. The prophet Elijah is here pictured as living in hiding in a cave, at the foot of Mount Horeb-Sinai. To that mountain of Yahweh, he fled to save his life from the wrath of the tyrannical King Ahab and his infamous spouse, the Tyrian princess, Jezebel. The prophet had been denouncing the royal pair for their persecution of the prophets of Yahweh, who bitterly opposed the licentious Baal worship which they intensified in ancient Israel, and for their high-handed oppression of their people. Elijah was awaiting there a message from God as to his next prophetic mission.

"The Still Small Voice"

In this ominous setting, the prophetic writer sets down this very pregnant statement:

> And He said: 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before God.' And behold, God passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before God; but God was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but God was not in the earthquake; and after the earth-

> quake a fire; but God was not in the fire; and after the fire *kol demamah dakkah*—a still small voice (or voice of great stillness). And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood at the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a Voice unto him and said . . .
>
> (I Kings, 19.11 ff.)

This significant prophetic passage, containing as it does in essence—as the modern critical students of the Bible have well perceived—the message of our entire Prophetic movement, suggests in a very fine poetic manner what I may properly call the Prophetic Way to God.

The Prophetic Way To God

Its felicitous phrase, *the still small voice,* I note, has since justly become famous. It has become, in fact, a synonym for that strange Master in the Inner House of Man—that enigmatic little God within us: Conscience, which, in the very depths of our being, plays the dual role of ubiquitous censor of our moral conduct and inescapable gadfly of Duty. That other great faculty of man—reason —which your Greek philosophers have so nobly celebrated, is no stranger to it. On occasion, the latter sheds helpful light upon it, and gives it

larger and wider moral perspective. The two, however, are by no means identical. While reason, as I just observed, often throws light in its mysterious path, and widens its moral horizons, that "voice" is *sui generis*—self-creative, and independent in its own right and being. It is an original, elemental dynamo of power in its own realm—the moral realm. It demands obedience, and woe to him who fails to obey its imperious demands! The price of disobedience to its commands is inner and outer (that is, social) war and chaos. On the other hand, the reward of obedience to its promptings is the highest gift available to man, namely, that inner "peace that passeth understanding," which serves as an indestructible tower of strength against all the inevitable buffetings of fate and circumstance.

Conscience—By Its Floodtide Shall Ye Judge It!

I note with great melancholy, eminent sir, that some modern writers on morals, dogmatically weighted down, as they are, with current evolutionary ideas, have attempted to belittle the moral uniqueness and potent reality of Conscience—for the reason, they loudly protest, that the great lady has a past! Triumphantly, do they point to the early beginnings of Conscience, which they find

quite lowly, if not questionable. With much learning, indeed, have they unearthed the fact that the dictates of morality have varied from age to age, and have been, moreover, different from the moral standards of their own day. In the interest of correcting their intellectual vision on the subject, I would refer these disparagers of Conscience to your own perceptive and wisdom-laden principle, that the proper way to evaluate the true nature of any phenomenon is to judge it, not by its ebb but by its floodtide—not by what it reveals in its earliest and crudest stages, but rather by what it is and achieves in its highest manifestations. If man was at one time ape-like, he is not for that reason less man today. And while some light may be thrown on certain aspects of his human behavior by casting a theoretical glance at his probably sub-human past, the real nature of man can truly be known only from a knowledge of him in his later capacity as a full statured man. And, above all, from the highest intellectual and moral expression of him in that unique stage of his humanity. The ape has remained an ape. But the supposedly ape-like man has become a thinker, an artist, a prophet! To know man, therefore, we dare not overlook that unique something in him that from all eternity, as it were, made him different not only from the ape but from all the rest of brute Nature.

A Sound Principle, Overlooked By The Psychologic Pundit

Must not, then, this enlightening principle be likewise applied to that very significant phenomenon *within* man—that "still small voice," which we call Conscience—and to the unique moral life which it expresses? Granted its crude beginnings and chequered history, its unique nature will not be fully or properly appreciated unless and until we stand—as the best of us, indeed, do—unshod and prostrate before the conscience of the martyr, and are rightly awed by its nobility and, above all, by our incisive realization of the elemental power which it wields over his conduct! That unique fact—of man dying that Conscience may live and have its way,—*that* is the real nature of Conscience! Indeed, *that* is its nature, no matter what its supposed history may have been, nor how cleverly the modern psychologic pundit may psychoanalyze it in order to attempt to explain away the tremendous spiritual or religious significance that it reveals to the prophetic soul.

" A Burning Fire, Shut Up In My Bones"

This significant, relentless drive of Conscience or Sense of Duty, we prophets had occasion to dwell upon frequently. As has been our wont, we

described the same—for reasons which I will explain presently—as the Voice of God. Thus, for instance, the prophet Amos:—

> The lion hath roared, who will not hear?
> The Lord hath spoken, who can but
> prophesy?" (Amos 3.8.)

May I cite my own words in this connection?—

> And if I say: 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name,' then there is in my heart, as it were, a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I weary myself to hold it in, but cannot! (Jer. 20.9.)

Well, indeed, judging from our own prophetic experience, has the philosopher Kant described the awe-inspiring character of this unique moral phenomenon in his justly famous sentence:—

> Two things fill the mind with new awe and increasing admiration, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within![7]

The Path-Finder

Now, eminent sir, the awe of which the philosopher speaks, and which he directs both to the starry heavens above, or Nature, and to the moral law within, or man's conscience, we prophets, for the compulsive reasons already suggested, have confined that awe to the moral law within in our arrival

at our moral God-conception, or our Prophetic or theistic faith. As to our philosophically sober attitude toward "the starry heavens above" or our surrounding Nature, I have already spoken earlier, having also indicated our reasons for denouncing man's ancient and unfortunate worship of the various phenomena of Nature, or Nature as a whole. Whatever awe, therefore, we may, on occasion, have felt upon our reflection on the latter, we naturally directed, not to Nature itself, but to the Spirit which, we believed, somehow informs Nature. Thus our psalmist properly sang:—

> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork!
>
> (Ps. 19.2.)

The real awe, which we prophets forever experienced, the oftener and more steadily we reflected on it, derived from the subject-matter of the second part of Kant's meaningful sentence, namely, from "the moral law within." And it was our frequent and steady reflection upon the nature and power which this "law" exerted upon our lives, that opened for us the path to our compulsive faith in the reality in our universe of a Moral Power greater than ourselves, or a Moral God.

The Disparagement Of Man By Man—The Modern Version

I note, eminent sir, with much melancholy, that

it has been the fashion among the latter-day naturalistic philosophers, obsessed as they are with the current evolutionary ideas, to disparage the significant phenomenon of Man, and particularly his moral life—to consider man as "nothing but" this or that combination of "merely" natural phenomena. Now, having mentally digested, in my present phase of existence the Doctrine of Evolution, I will grant that this doctrine indeed throws light on the physiological history of man and his physiological relation to Nature. Its said revelations concerning man, according to our insights, however, must not soberly be taken as the complete explanation of *everything* about man. Confused by a narrow-minded interpretation of the latter-day evolutionary theory, which would derogate man to "nothing but" another phenomenon of vital nature, hopelessly disillusioned philosophical writers would have it that man must, however reluctantly but necessarily, surrender, among other things, his deeply cherished, self-redeeming sense of essential dignity.

The End Of Tragedy!—
The New Bards And Their New Ditty

No longer, then, it is argued, can another Bard of Avon seriously indulge in the writing of Tragedy, in exaltation of the Spirit of Man. Is not Tragedy—they ask—based on the fundamental con-

viction of the essential dignity of man? But has not Evolution torn such exalted claims on the part of man to tatters? In the traditional conception of the little, finite, homocentric cosmos, they concede, Man could, indeed, lay claim to real dignity. In that pre-scientific little world, providentially centered around man as the uniquely distinguished phenomenon of Creation, the failures of men, especially of the great amongst them, such as kings and princes, to realize their great ambitions, contained, to be sure, they argue, the subject-matter of Tragedy. Theirs were the failures of significant beings, in a humanly significant world—a world specifically made for man and for the realization of his lofty ambitions. In the tremendously bigger, Copernican, Evolutionary universe, however (with a theistic God, of course, read out of the picture), such as is man's today, can man's new bards, it is rhetorically asked, regale him with anything more encouraging than that pathetic little ditty—"Little Man, What Now?" In this new world of his, wherein man is "nothing but" a mere speck of dust on the limitless horizon of Nature, precariously existing on sufferance, forever tilted on the brink of utter disaster,—in such a world, it is seriously argued, man's vaunted dignity has flown out of the window. That time-honored dignity of his has turned into pathos, and the tragedy of his failures into mere bathos.[8]

For A Re-examination Of The Spiritual Depths Of Human Personality

This new version of the disparagement of man by man, eminent sir, is, incidentally, a significant commentary on the havoc wrought upon the spirit of many moderns by their hasty, dogmatic assumption of the atheistic premise in their interpretation of the new revelations of Science. To them, I would seriously make the plea for a much needed sober re-examination of the spiritual depths of human personality. Such a re-examination may, indeed, enable them to re-discover that soul-steadying sense of the fundamental dignity of man, which they have unwisely persuaded themselves that they must surrender. Such an incisive second-look at man's inner dignity, may perhaps give even that Copernican, Evolution-obsessed, Reason-bound man an *insight* into the possibility, nay, into the reality of that Prophetic God of ours, even as it has so inspiringly given us, prophets, so long ago!

The Disparagement Of Man By Man—The Prophetic Version

Our prophets, too, eminent sir, and their spiritual heirs—our Talmudic and post-Talmudic

sages—have registered some uncomplimentary things about man. Let me recall the saintly prophet Isaiah's disparagement of himself—in his visioned presence before the thrice-holy God—as a man of "unclean lips." I might also cite, in this connection, the pertinent story of one of our great rabbis —Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai. His disciples, standing at his deathbed, were astounded to find their courageous master depressed and weeping in the hour of his death. "Light of Israel," they exclaimed, "why do you weep?" The dying sage, in effect, answered: "Not on account of death do I fear, but because of having to appear before the Eternal Judge, whose righteousness is incorruptible!" (Berakot 28b.) In like manner, the saintly Job commiserates with "man that is born of woman." And if this is not disparagement enough for the son of man, our rabbis go out of their way to make him sternly mindful of the disillusioning fact—and our medieval philosophical moralist, Baḥya ibn Pakuda, in his spiritually exalting classic, "Duties of the Heart" (Part VI, "Gate of Humility"), goes out of his way in quoting them on this point—that the lowly origin of man is but a putrefying drop! The Talmudic context in which this disconcerting reference occurs is profoundly revealing: "Reflect upon three things, and thou wilt not come within the power of sin; know whence thou camest, and whither thou art

going, and before whom thou wilt have to give account and reckoning. Whence thou camest:—from a putrefying drop; whither thou art going:—to a place of dust, worms and maggots; and before whom thou wilt have to give account and reckoning:—before the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He." (Abot III, 1.)

The motive of this prophetic disparagement of man, it goes without saying, was of an entirely different order from that of some of our disillusioned moderns. The prophetic motive was not belittlement for its own sake. Its purpose was rather that of a moral *challenge* to man to hew closer to his Source—to the fundamental spiritual dignity that lies embedded deep, however dormant, within him, and whose Source is God. By challengingly comparing man's moral frailty and spiritual apathy with the ineffable holiness of God, a moral challenge was held up to man to rise above the lowly physiological origins of his mortal self, to rise ever closer to that other self of his, which, according to our prophetic insights, was formed in the Divine Dignity of God's own Image.

Jewish Tradition Champions The Essential Dignity Of Man

Thus despite the aforementioned round of belittlement of man, Jewish tradition, from the ear-

liest recorded beginnings, inspiringly glorified man as God's noblest work of creation, and placed him on a rung "but little lower than God." It forever singled him out as the only one of God's creatures whom He had created in His own image of Moral Holiness. Man, as a physiological creature, Jewish tradition readily concedes, is, indeed, but another creature of Nature. Our tradition, at the same time, however, always took pains to point to man's uniquely distinguishing spiritual endowment; particularly, to his moral endowment, and to the great lesson that this significant fact reveals. By virtue of this moral endowment, our tradition has stubbornly and, I believe, wisely insisted, man is possessed of a unique dignity that places him above the rest of dumb Creation. In that moral uniqueness, there eternally resides, according to our prophetic lights, man's essential dignity, of which his physiological relationship to the rest of Nature can never rob him. Man forfeits his claim to this dignity only if and when he fails to live by the dictates of the "moral law within." Man will, however, forever retain that dignity, in our view, as long as he faithfully follows the relentless promptings of his "still small voice," especially in those instances when to heed its promptings requires that sacrificial moral effort which spells martyrdom.

Plumbing The Depths Of Human Personality In The New World-Picture

Indeed, in our prophetic view, only those who have failed to plumb the height, breadth and depth of the "still small voice," and the essential human dignity which it reveals and represents to him who loyally follows its call to whatever sacrificial lengths it commands, those alone will choose to argue that the dignity of human life at its sacrificial noblest is a thing of the past. Only they will feel constrained to argue that modern man must reluctantly but necessarily surrender his precious sense of human dignity, just because our physical world-picture has been radically altered.

In what essential sense, I ask, is the dignity of man's moral effort diminished by virtue of the fact that man's moral drama takes place in a great, dangerous, Copernican, evolutionary universe, rather than in the traditional, infinitesimally smaller, static and safe medieval world of Spheres? May not one more cogently argue that in such an infinitely enlarged and bewildering universe, man's relentless determination to live out the highest that is within him—to carry on his hazardous battles for integrity and justice, as well as for the advancement of his intellectual and artistic ideals,—may not one, I ask, more convincingly contend that

this almost Divine display of moral grandeur rather evinces an even more incisive human dignity than could have been shown by man in the serener days gone by? In a universe that may some day crash in utter chaos and obliterate the entire race of man—as some modern scientific worriers fear,—what better proof does the man of today need in order to continue to believe in the essential dignity of the human spirit than the glorious relentlessness of his pursuit of cherished moral and intellectual ideals? And is this not subject-matter for Tragedy, deeper and greater than was available to the Immortal Bard? Does not such moral effort, in a world infinitely more precarious, truly lift man to the Dignity of Divinity?

The Deathless Moral Grandeur Of The Spirit Of Man

No, according to our prophetic lights, man's moral nature forever endows him with unique and eternal dignity. It will forever uniquely distinguish him from the dumb and brute world, no matter how much larger our world-picture grows, and no matter what may ultimately happen to that world. A noble deed, done by man in the face of all natural obstacles from without and from within, cannot, according to our moral insight, fail to stamp a deathless moral grandeur

upon man. Compared to such a deed, the physical stupendousness of our entire stellar system is meaningless, no matter how awing the latter may be to the little scientist or materialist philosopher, who is so easily cowed morally by stupendous size and distances measured in light years!

Outpouring Of Moral Courage Versus Physical Immensity

A prophet Nathan's "Thou art the man!"; an Elijah's perilous "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?"; an Amos' morally heroic appearance at Bethel; a Nehemiah's rebuilding with one hand the walls of Jerusalem and with the other brandishing the sword against those who refused to permit the re-birth of an heroic nation; an Akiba's martyrdom at the hands of the Romans in defense of his spiritual heritage; a Socrates drinking of the cup of hemlock; a Bruno burning on the stake; an Israel's age-long defiance of an entire world in order to retain its spiritual integrity; and the countless other acts of moral heroism on the part of individuals and groups, famous and obscure, which could be cited from the annals of all peoples and of all ages,—all this persistent and relentless outpouring of moral courage in the face of an amoral Nature and immoral social order, should, in our prophetic view, forever restrain a

sober man from allowing himself to fall into a sense of moral insignificance and disillusionment before a universal display of dumb, physical immensity. Yes, we aver, even in a universe of such physical stupendousness, as that of modern man's, or even in a more immense and more complicated universe that may be revealed by future Science, man is justified, thanks to his indefeasible moral courage, in holding fast to his self-steadying, self-redeeming sense of dignity and unique spiritual importance. Nay, even more than ever before, seeing, as I have already observed, that even greater moral courage is required of man in his new cosmic environment to carry on his battles for the realization of his ideals.

Praise From The Philosopher, But Not Without Another Point

I hate to interrupt even for a moment, my dear Jeremiah, the progress of your thoughtful Prophetic Moral Argument. But in listening to your at once impassioned and sober exaltation of man's moral nature and the eternal lift it must afford the spirit of man, I cannot refrain from again observing how much deeper you, Hebrew Prophets, have exploited that other eminently human faculty of man than have we, Hellenes. Preoccupied as we have been with the great virtues of our ra-

tional faculty, we Hellenes were too readily disposed to relegate man's moral faculty to a mere satrapy of our reason. Seeing man's moral nature —as you Hebrew Prophets have perceived it—as a mighty King in his own far-flung empire, even a poor philosopher can sense that you have sought and found in that great empire of the moral spirit infinitely more valuable treasures than we Greek philosophers succeeded in discovering. The only disturbing question, however, my dear Jeremiah, is whether *all* the great treasures you Prophets have found therein can be rationally validated.

"The Still Small Voice" And Man's Ancient Door Of Hope

Let me assure you, my dear Aristotle, that my joy over your great compliment to our Hebrew Prophets has not made me overlook its concluding, sharp, philosophic point. That point, I must blunt, to some extent—you gently remind me—in order to earn your philosophic respect for our main issue—the philosophic justification of our Prophetic God-conception. I am directly coming to that.

I was about to say, eminent sir, before your pleasing and apt interpolation, that our persistent devotion to, and steady reflection on, that philosophically intriguing "still small voice" within us, while it has confirmed us in the conviction—so

important and so self-redeeming to man—of the essential Dignity of Man, has done for us a great deal more. It has also opened for us wider and surer man's ancient Door of Hope—the door to our Prophetic or theistic faith—that very treasure, to which your disturbing question no doubt referred.

The more we prophets have become aware, out of the depths of our own moral experience, of the unique and exalted nature of that "still small voice" within us, the more we came to recognize the relentless and implacable power it has wielded over our own lives and the lives of all men and women distinguished for their moral endeavors, to such an extent that it actually overwhelmed us, compelling us to perform deeds that are directly contrary to our natural, human propensities to live "at ease in Zion," yes, to the lengths of impelling us, in extreme moral situations, to the very destruction of our natural selves,—the oftener, I say, and the more steadily, we prophets have reflected on this spiritually stupendous reality, the more inevitably have we become convinced that this irresistible "still small voice"—this ineluctable "moral law within"—points definitely, however mysteriously, to the presence and the functioning within and beyond us of a "Power not-ourselves that makes for righteousness." And this last, sir, is our supreme vision of God.

The Prophet Repairs To Meet The Theistic "Pathetic Fallacy"

Now, eminent sir, in our identifying of our compulsive moral life with this Moral Power, we have become guilty of what, I understand, the modern logic of your philosophy calls a "pathetic fallacy"—that bugaboo phrase to which we have already had occasion to refer. That is, we have allowed our human feelings or experiences to read into the external universe strictly human qualities or realities that may not be there. That even you, yourself, have been more or less guilty of the same "fallacy"—by the very act of deifying our human reason—I have already had occasion to observe. This, you were courageous enough to admit, though with a fine reservation, with which my argument will presently deal. As for us, Prophets, as I have already suggested, we freely admit this "guilt." With this important difference, however, that, according to our prophetic insights, we consider this "pathetic fallacy" not a fallacy at all, but rather a profound philosophical truth.

Philosophy Has Many "Ways"

This last statement, my dear Aristotle, may indeed surprise you, nay, perhaps, scandalize your

Hellenic philosophic sensibilities. But it should surprise you only, if you continue to insist that your own philosophic vision, which derives from, and is solely dependent on, the formulae of our discursive reason, is the only possible and legitimate way of divining the ultimate mystery that is our Universe. In our present existence, as you have yourself already faintly intimated, I am sure that you have been able to appreciate more fully the truth that Philosophy has at least several other "Ways," and that each has its important contribution to make toward man's coming to terms, as it were, with the Universe.

And One Of Its "Ways" Is— Philosophy As "Mystical Insight"

One of Philosophy's other ways, as a "modern" has appropriately called it, is that of "mystical insight."[9] In your earthly existence, I dare say, you have not, according to your earlier confession, given the latter's claims the consideration that it merits,—exclusively pre-occupied as you then were with your nation's novel and eminently useful experiment with the data of our discursive reason. Perhaps, then, you may be more disposed to do so now.

Of course, this "way" of philosophy as mystical insight is very ancient—much more ancient, in-

deed, as you know, than rational philosophy, or, as the same "modern" has significantly called it, "logical faith." But surely this (to me rather intriguing fact), you will no doubt agree with me, is not a good enough reason, even in accordance with the canons of your own logic, for refusing to give this other "Way" of Philosophy that more sympathetic, "on-second-thought," consideration.

It seems to me that an acceptable reason for such reconsideration of it should be your present, doubtlessly more acute appreciation of the ultimate limitations of our intellect.

I am, of course, hopefully counting on other, more persuasive reasons that may dispose you toward a more generous appreciation of this non-Hellenic "Way" of philosophy. I have in mind, for instance, your very possible greater awareness here of the generally overlooked, but nonetheless undeniable fact of the most fruitful presence of the mystical insight in almost all of man's creative spiritual activities. Indeed, not only in religion, and in morals, but, as significantly admitted by even some modern naturalistic philosophers,[10] in the secular province of art as well. Even—*mirabile dictu*—in the philosophic speculations of the rational philosophers, themselves. *Exemplia gratia*: its presence in your own deification of Reason, which philosophic *coup,* I am definitely convinced, could not have been negotiated without some sort

of mystical "leap." And shall I remind you of that most significant touch of mysticism in that arch intellectualist amongst the philosophers—the Sage of Amsterdam? I refer, of course, to his most surprising statement at the end of his all-out intellectualist *magnum opus*—that the highest kind of knowledge is *scientia intuitiva—intuitive* knowledge![11] And—*mirabilissimum dictu*—can we disregard the admitted and fruitful presence of the mystic insight in even the highly abstract minds of the theoretic scientists? How helpful these rationally inexplicable insights have been to them in the gestation stages of their new scientific theories, is eloquently admitted, I note, by one of the greatest of them among the "moderns."[12] Finally, can one omit to mention the awing presence of the mystical insight in those privileged moments of even the work-a-day life of the ordinary man and woman?

The Prophets' Certainties Anent Those Mystical Insights

We prophets, eminent sir, are very profoundly convinced of the first principle, or the "beginning of wisdom," of this philosophy. I refer to its aforementioned major premise of the *limitations* of our discursive reason—that very great faculty of man upon which Science and Rational Philosophy so ex-

clusively depend. I have in mind its limitations touching the ultimates of existence—all those problems which we generally subsume under that meaningful term "God." We prophets, to say nothing of the philosophic mystics of all ages, are, further, profoundly convinced, from our own experiences, that in the depths of man's personality, or soul—which is admittedly broader than our in-intellect—there dwell certain *mystic potencies,* which, upon due cultivation, can and do furnish man *deeper insights* into the ultimate reality of our universe than the mere "structural" or peripheral knowledge that is garnered by the thin formulae of Science and those philosophic disciplines that are exclusively dependent on our intellect. We, prophets, are, finally, profoundly convinced, and again from our own deepest spiritual experience, of the validity of this philosophy's claims, that the said non- or super-rational, mystic insights enable those who have attained them to come into *mystic communion* with the heart of things, rather than with the periphery,—indeed, with the very Life of the Universe. This communion—it has, furthermore, been our experience—brings the true mystic *new sources* of *joy* and *peace* and *power* to surmount the problems of existence, as well as the eternal antinomies or the unresolvable contradictions connected with such ultimate problems as the existence of God, which are posed by the intellect.

The Mystic Insight As The Ultimate Basis Of Prophetic Or Theistic Faith

And it goes without saying, my dear Aristotle, that it is just this philosophy as mystic insight that is implied in, and is at the basis of, our Prophetic God-conception. By the aid of these mystic potencies in the depths of their personalities, our prophets were enabled to perceive that the so-called theistic "pathetic fallacy" is no fallacy at all, but that it rather contains the essence of the profoundest truth. Those mystic insights, in fact, enabled us to emancipate ourselves from the shackles of the interminable antinomies of our rational faculty, and to reach out to the heart of things—to "see" and "feel" the Life of the universe in personality's own terms, in terms of personality communing with Personality!

The Prophets' "Thus Saith The Lord" Needed No Logical Demonstration

You were gracious enough to state earlier that you felt that there was a respectable philosophy behind our Prophetic faith, though we prophets, for one good reason or another, failed to leave for posterity a rational justification or demonstration of it. That is correct. And need I now point out that the significant reason for our omission is that

logical demonstration can never "prove" our theistic thesis? Touching our supreme interest, your way of philosophy as rationalism or logic has for us only very limited or negative value. To wit, it can only warn us of the limitations of our reason, as applied to our theistic insights. The mental processes by which we have attained our insight or Vision of God as Moral Personality were fundamentally different from those that have led the rationalist or idealist philosopher to his ultimate Conclusion. It was only, as I have already suggested, when that philosopher, too, as has been often the case, leaped beyond his rational base and ended up in a mystic vision, that he could come closer to our Vision of the Ultimate Reality.

Our insights, sir, have come to us as mystic experiences, out of the depths of our personalities, and as the fruition of a certain way of life—the sacrificially active, moral life. For this very reason, we did not find it necessary—nor was it at all possible—to impart our message, or the reality of our vision, to our people and to mankind as a whole, by way of logical demonstration. Our method of doing this was necessarily one of personal suasion, or—better still—of mystic contagion. Thanks to our intuitive certitude of our vision, we became spiritually contagious *spokesmen* (*nebiim*) of that Vision. People followed us because they were *inspired* by us, even as we ourselves were inspired

by our Vision. Their response to our Message was the instinctive response of personality to personality—even as our mystic response to the Ultimate Reality was that of personality to Personality!

This will also answer your other inquiry as to why we prophets have exerted so much more effective influence upon mankind than have you, philosophers. Once one grants the reality of the latent mystic sense of mankind—once one grants the power of the human soul, not merely to reason out, but to *divine* the Ultimate Reality—,one will find not at all enigmatic the wide persuasive influence, which the prophets of Israel, and others who were similarly inspired, have exerted and continue to exert in the world. Mankind's mystic sense has responded to our mystic vision, or insight, by mystical contagion, if you will. For this reason, countless men and women have instinctively looked upon us as men of God—as spokesmen, not of ourselves, but of a greater Moral Power! And for this eminent reason, I am convinced, they will continue to do so, despite all the best-spun rational arguments of cynics and anti-theistic philosophers of all ages in disparagment of the validity of our *Thus Saith The Lord's*!

The Philosopher Concedes—But With Another Point

I must confess, my dear Jeremiah, that we occi-

dental Hellenes—perhaps as a reaction to the obscurantist tendencies and deplorable social consequences of oriental mysticism, and no doubt also because of our sanguine faith in our novel experiments with our faculty of reason—have failed to explore more deeply and more fruitfully this latent mystical insight, which you have so effectively defined. You will admit, however, from what we know, for instance, of those ancient great adepts of Mysticism—the Indian mystic philosophers—that the fruit of that mystic insight which you celebrate, was anything but that Moral Personality which you, Prophets, have envisaged as the Ultimate Reality.

The Fruit Of The Mystic Vision, When Beclouded By World- And Life-Weariness

I realize, of course, my dear Aristotle, that this mysticism of which I speak, which, I contend, must be and is at the basis of all religions worthy of the name, has not always given birth to the said Prophetic fruit. The Indian mystics, as you have implied, have come forward long ago with a mystic vision of an Ultimate Reality, to which Personality is nothing less than anathema. One *must* not—nay, one *cannot*—dogmatize on the ultimate aperçus of such a very "personal" experience as the mystic insight. Perhaps this insight may eventuate into entirely different visions of the Ultimate

Reality. I do not propose to set myself up as an authority on the painful intricacies of the mystical philosophies of the ancient Hindus. Of the little, however, that I have garnered here on the subject, it is my humble opinion that in the case of the Indian mystics, their ultimate vision was beclouded by their other-wordly prejudices—by their world- and life-weariness. In the case of the Buddha, in particular, I venture to say that his vision was marred by his obsession with the problem of man's suffering, which he believed to be ultimately due to man's individuality or personality. The Buddha, therefore, looked for salvation in the de-individualization or depersonalization of man, *via* a quixotic rational-mystical attempt to read out as Illusion the fact of man's individual personality and the entire visible world which it is supposed to body forth. If man would but mystically think that supposedly illusive source of evil out of existence (so ran, in effect, his philosophic-mystic thesis), he will then be completely absorbed into the All—into the promised, impersonal and painless realm of Nirvana![13]

The Mystic Insights, Born Of The Prophetic Moral Life

We prophets, are, of course, not dogmatic enough to question the "enlightenment" and in-

ner peace which the Buddha and the like-minded claimed to have derived from their all-out other-worldly mysticism. As I mentioned earlier, however, we Jews, even like unto you, Greeks, have not been world-weary, other-worldly creatures. We never hated life, or this visible world, notwithstanding its heavy toll of problems and sorrows. And as for human individuality or personality, we have always considered it the most transcendent achievement of Creation. It is man's supreme vehicle by which he transcends all inanimate and dumb Nature, and by which he is, furthermore, enabled to commune with the ultimate Moral Personality. *Our* mystic sense has, therefore, taken us on an entirely different and eminently more useful path socially. Since the moral nature of man has always been of supreme importance to us, we inevitably looked for and succeeded in finding therein the mystic insight that has yielded us *our* vision of the Ultimate. And the promising way, toward which that ineluctable "still small voice" pointed for us, was the Moral Way, which, as I indicated earlier, is the Prophetic Way to God. In the justly famous Summation of the True Religious Life of our prophet Micah, man's hope "to walk humbly with thy God"—and all that this great phrase implies—is significantly preceded by that inescapable condition:—"to do justice and love mercy." Morality, in its highest manifestation of doing good for its own sake, is

the expression of man's personality. As such, it gives birth to its own insights—insights in its own terms: Personality. It finds in brief—as in our own prophetic experience—personality speaking to Personality. Hence, our own mystic insight had its ultimate fruition in God as Moral Personality.

God As Moral Personality Via The Rich Mysticism Of The Moral Life

To those moderns, then, who are not temperamentally unsympathetic to our faith or philosophy as mystical insight, and who at the same time are constitutionally averse to all other-worldly philosophies, we soberly recommend a search for our mystical insight of God as Moral Personality *via* the Prophetic Moral Way. There is a rich mysticism, we aver, in the deep vistas of the active and reflective moral life, which enables the man of sacrificial integrity to transcend the impersonal conclusions of abstract reason or the limiting confines of would-be-all-inclusive "Naturalism." Sacrificially walking with us on that Moral Way, those moderns, too, may attain the supremely rewarding vision of a Power not-ourselves that makes for Righteousness. They, too, may find themselves, at some crossroad of that soul-exalting Way, walking, not alone, but confidently, with that morally meaning-

ful God—that Moral Personality, whom we Prophets have exultingly known.

And by God as Moral Personality, it is important to reiterate, we prophets mean, not a Being in that crude anthropomorphic sense which would impute to Him the mortal characteristics of man. Is it not against this primitive conception of God that we prophets have directed our fire? We mean by this great term, a Moral Being, Who, however transcendentally much He is above man, even in the latter's supremest capacity as thinker and prophet, nevertheless reveals and bespeaks affinity with the immortal self of man. By Moral Personality, we mean, in brief, One who is aware of man's existence, to Whom man's spiritual aspirations are important, and Who is therefore greatly concerned about the evolving human drama. Nay, we mean One, Who, in His own inscrutable way, actively participates therein, by giving those men and women, who, by virtue of the intensity of their moral life, are mystically at one with Him, those *extra* spiritual resources of courage to carry on their moral battles in the face of all obstacles, within and without, fortifying them with His *assurance* in the ultimate victory of the right, inspiring them, above all, with the redeeming confidence that man's moral struggles, in this morally-challenging mundane interlude between two eter-

nities, are replete—despite suffering, disillusion and physical death—with eternal worth and destiny!

This, in sum, eminent sir, is the tremendous meaning that our Prophetic God-conception has for the spirit of man. Its philosophic justification may be found in the perception of Philosophy as mystical insight. This insight, in turn, is to be sought, and, according to our own prophetic experiences, may be found, in the deep, mystical experiences of man's sacrificial devotion to the moral life.

As The Philosopher Sees It—At Once Its Strength And Weakness

Your increasingly deepening exposition of the moral life, I am pleased to admit, my dear Jeremiah, evokes in one the hopeful suspicion that there may be more to the moral life than the mere application of reason to man's conduct—as we Greeks were inclined to believe. Your Prophetic Moral Argument, as you have well called it, which interprets the moral life as something significant in its own right—as no less than an elemental force in the soul of man, capable of opening for him those deeper mystic vistas which beckon to your Prophetic God as Moral Personality,—your Prophetic Moral Argument happily emerges as a highly

commendable challenge, rich with religious possibilities.

As such, my dear Jeremiah, I am afraid, you will find me, at the end of my Elysian second-thoughts on the subject, not at all disposed to disparage it. A philosophy that, on the whole, adds up to an inspiring challenge toward deeper moral living, and holds out, furthermore, the boon of deeper religious hope, yet eschews obscurantism and other-worldliness, cannot be lightly regarded even by an all-out intellectualist who does not like to be accused of dogmatic narrow-mindedness. I can even go further and say that, by deriving from the ultimately unarguable mystic experiences of the prophetic individual, your Prophetic Moral Argument lifts itself by its own boot straps, as it were, to a sort of impregnability. For, despite whatever credence the extreme mysticism-hating rationalist may give to the disparaging clinical analysis of the mystical experience offered by some modern psychologists,[14] he cannot honestly deny the pervasive presence of that experience, to which you have so persuasively pointed. The best he can legitimately do is to question the mystic's competence in properly interpreting that experience, or, in other words, the validity of his far-flung claims for it.

In this, its just mentioned strength, however, does not, my dear Jeremiah, also lie the perennial

weakness of your Prophetic Moral Argument? I mean, in the fact that its mystic basis, or, even more so, the far-flung interpretation thereof, cannot, by its very nature, be substantiated by reason?

Your honest admission, as an intellectualist philosopher, my dear Aristotle, of your respect for our Prophetic Moral Argument because of the potent moral and religious challenge which it holds, gives me, as prophet, additional courage to dispute its just described weakness, namely, the lack of rational proof for its basic mystic thesis. I will admit that this is a weakness, nay, a fatal weakness, to the extreme rationalist who is narrow-minded enough to persist in his dogmatism that the knowledge of our universe is exhausted by the data of our reason, or, in other words, that nothing can be considered real unless it can be rationally demonstrated. Having admitted this much, however, I fail to see how this admission proves fatal to our Argument from the viewpoint of the more broad-minded on the subject, nay, even, from the viewpoint of the rationalist, himself, whom you described as not wanting to be accused of dogmatic narrow-mindedness.

For even this would-be undogmatic rationalist must sooner or later embarrassingly become aware of the fact that the very weakness which is ascribed to the mystical insight, namely, the lack of rational demonstrability thereof, is equally discover-

able in the very fundamental premise of his own philosophy!

Alas, upon due reflection, he must become painfully aware of the fact, as is true, I note, of a representative of the modern naturalistic philosophers who are certainly no obscurantist disparagers of reason and science, yes, aware of the astounding fact that the reasonableness of reason itself remains undemonstrable! That, as this philosopher puts it, when the logician asks us to assent to self-evidence, it is tantamount to the abdication of the procedure of demonstration itself, or the pointing in silence, as does the mystic![15]

If, then, the very reasonableness of reason itself is ultimately undemonstrable, without destroying our faith in reason or our conviction of its high usefulness, why, by the same logic, should the rational undemonstrability of the mystical element in our Prophetic Argument be considered any more damaging to that Argument? The mystical insight of the prophet has other ways, and, we have seen, more convincing ways, of confirming the validity of its message than those of mere logical demonstration.

The weakness, my dear Aristotle, which you find in our Prophetic Moral Argument, lies not, according to our Prophetic insights, in the mystical basis of our Argument. It lies rather in the minds of those rational philosophers who insist on look-

ing at that Argument through their own befogging rational spectacles. Indeed, that weakness lies in Philosophy, itself; or more correctly, in that narrow conception of Philosophy which confines it to those "ways" that depend entirely on the methods and data of our rational faculty.

Prophetic Religion And Philosophy

Indeed, if you choose to exclude from Philosophy that most ancient way which is known as mystical insight, and arbitrarily restrict Philosophy only to those of its ways which exclusively depend on the data and formulae of reason, then we prophets would be compelled to say that Philosophy and Prophetic Religion deal with two different worlds of discourse—to use a modern philosophic phrase, but with a far deeper meaning.

In its ultimate aim of establishing a Cosmic Ethic—a sort of moral attitude toward the universe on the part of man, which it constructs, on the whole, upon the world-picture that emerges from the "last word" of Science—Philosophy, in your classically Greek conception thereof, necessarily proceeds by its own peculiar method—the rational or logical method. Its sole principle is reason, and its language is abstract logic—the language of Reason.

This, it is important to note, is no less true of

idealistic philosophy than of the most extreme materialist philosophy. The devotee of each of these philosophies, of course, starts out with his own unique article of faith. And may I note that each soon forgets, or never realizes to start with, that his fundamental premise is no more than an article of *faith*? They each start out with their respective presuppositions, or faith—the materialist, with his faith that the world is at bottom "atom and the void," the idealist with his "logical faith" that the world is at bottom rational. From there on, the idealist, no less than the materialist, in proceeding with his job of constructing his philosophic world-picture, remains, and, as a philosopher, *must* remain, loyal to the strictly rational or logical, that is, basically "impersonal," principle. Thus when even the out-and-out idealist finally emerges with some sort of a rational or spiritual Entity for his Universe, that Entity of his, necessarily, cannot go beyond an impersonal Reason, or an impersonal Absolute. And this, my dear Aristotle, you will readily admit, is still miles apart from the Moral Personality, or Moral God, of Prophetic Religion. This is perhaps as it should be. That is the best that Philosophy—as logical faith—can accomplish religiously. Unless the idealist philosopher, too, begins to "mysticize,"—and most of them, sooner or later, do!

The Great Divide And The Prophets' Mystical Insight

What I am attempting to bring forward, eminent sir, is that even idealistic philosophy, necessarily harnessed as it is to its own strictly rational discipline, can never bridge that awful gap which yawns between Reason and Theism, or, for that matter, between Reason and any religious philosophy that is seriously based on the idea of God. That great Divide can only be negotiated by that super-rational insight, or vision, of the religious mystic. That unique "leap" is truly a non-sequitur to the strictly impersonal, logical reasoning of philosophy as idealism or intellectualism. Not so, however, to the mystical "logic" of profound moral experience. A profound logic, it, of course, has —this mystical leap from the reality of the "moral law within" to "the Power not-ourselves that makes for Righteousness." But it is not the logic of strictly rational philosophy. It has a logic of its own — a logic informed with and supported by the inevitable mysticism of profound moral experience. And only he, who has prophetically lived the moral life in all its martyrdom-burdened depth and grandeur, can find that logic eminently and efficaciously valid. Only he can mystically arrive at that ultimate Conclusion of *our* philosophers or

sages:—"The reverence of God, *that* is wisdom, and to shun evil (or to live the moral life in all its sacrificial depth and grandeur) is understanding!"
(Job 28.28.)

"The Handmaiden"

To be sure, Philosophy as idealism or logical faith, can and does serve as a "handmaiden" to theistic religion. But not in the medieval theological sense of that term—as an aid in the rationally impossible task of "proving" the existence of the God that Tradition has originally vouched for. Rather does its real handmaidenly role emerge in these two more modest but useful ways: First, in arguing persuasively (but, unfortunately, owing to the trans-rational subject-matter of the argument, not incontrovertibly) against the thesis that reality is mere "atom and the void" or "nothing but" mere Mechanism. And, again, in the implied or actual pointing, by its pro-theistic exponents, to the available super-rational, mystic potencies of the human soul, which, as vouched for by the intellectual theistic mystics of all ages, may and can successfully take up the burden of theistic faith at that inevitable point where idealistic philosophy, as such, is compelled to declare:—Thus far can I go, but no further!

Why The Classic Philosophic "Proofs" For The Existence Of God Have Never Proved

For this reason one can hardly *reason* oneself, as much as one might try, into the Prophetic conviction of God as Moral Personality. Toward that sublime goal, the mere effort of rationalistic argument must forever prove futile, according to my prophetic lights. We have no record of a "doubting Thomas" ever having been "converted" to the theistic faith by even the celebrated historic philosophic "proofs" for the existence of God. Not even, I dare say (may I humbly remind you of your own philosophic sin?) by your own so-called Cosmological-Un-moved-Mover Proof from Motion!

I am afraid, my dear Jeremiah, that I shall never live down that unpardonable sin!

Your present nostalgic smile, my dear Aristotle, I dare say, no doubt betokens your philosophic reflections on how over-seriously your said ingenious "proof" was employed by the medieval theologicians, who so good-naturedly transformed your eminent Hellenic self into a pious Biblical theist!

And thus very undeservedly, reverend sir, placed me in your eminent Prophetic company!

Thanks, my dear Aristotle. But to return to my present argument.

Need I remind you, my dear Aristotle, that we

also have no record of any similar conversions that were effected by Bishop Anselm's Ontological Proof, which was ingenuously based—when more than superficially understood—on the nature of thought itself. Nor by that most commonly persuasive and enduringly appealing of them all—the so-called Teleological Proof, based on the idea of Order, or Design, in Nature, brought forward by your famous teacher, Plato. Even if these classic philosophic "proofs" could never be logically questioned—and need I remind you that they were so questioned, and even long before the advent of that "desperado of modern Critical thought," Immanuel Kant—, all of them in their imposing ensemble, I dare say, were not, and *could* not be, charged with the needed logical suasion to bring even one penitent to the "Mourners' Bench." And for the simple reason that religious faith or conviction comes not by way of the philosophic syllogism, but by the mystic insight of the prophet, or —for the less religiously gifted—by the mystic contagion of the prophet's mystically inspired message.

—And Why The Affirmations Of The Prophetic Soul Forever Convince Or Challenge

On the other hand, how immediately convincing, or inspiring, were the prophetic deliverances

of our prophets and sages, despite their lack of these rational or intellectual props!

These rational props—these celebrated philosophic "proofs"—need I remind you in passing?—were proferred by pious souls, who were already convinced by that mystic endowment or contagion, of which I have spoken. It was by such as these that they were proferred as a "Guide of the Perplexed"—to those, in other words, who rashly and unwisely permitted the new scientific "revelations" of their day to becloud their dormant religious insights.

To return, however, to my main argument. When the prophet exclaims:—

> O Lord, my strength, and my stronghold,
> And My refuge, in the day of affliction!
> (Jer. 16.19),—

who, but the dogmatic sceptic or thoughtless cynic, could doubt him? And when the psalmist ecstatically exclaims:—

> Whom have I in heaven, but Thee?
> And beside Thee, I desire none upon earth!
> (Ps. 73.25),

and when another psalmist *sings*:—

> The Lord is my shepherd;
> I shall not want! (Ps. 23.1),—

who will not be tempted—if he is wise—to explore the mystic secret of their ineluctable trust and serenity? And when a Job, as a result of his pro-

found and sacrificial experiences, exultingly announces:—

> I had heard of Thee by report,
> But now mine eye hath beheld Thee.
> Therefore, though I am wasting away,
> I am comforted for my lot of dust and ashes!
> (Job 42.5-6),—

who but the congenital sceptic will not be persuaded to give a sympathetic hearing, for the good of his uninspired soul, to Job's life-redeeming mystic insight?

And why? Is it not for the eminent reason that these soul-challenging affirmations come from the depths of man's personality, from the heart of things, as it were, from the mystic communion of the soul of man with the very Heart of the Universe? Is it not for that reason that they have the power to capture the ever-present, though dormant, mystical endowment of humankind? Such, sir, is our prophetic conviction! The personality that has been mystically touched by Personality is mystically enabled to touch the very depths of the personalities of all humankind.

Non-Prophetic God-conceptions, Religiously Inadequate, And Also Vulnerable To Reason

Those intellectual props, intended, of course, to

reconcile religious faith with Reason or Science, inevitably bring to my mind, and with much melancholy, the various assortments of non-Prophetic conceptions of God. These have been proferred by naive souls in the past, and very profusely so, I note, in modern times, as more suitable pabulum for the religious soul of man.

I recall these, I say, with much melancholy. And for these two very sober reasons. Most of these non-Prophetic Designs for Divinity, besides inevitably proving themselves religiously inadequate, are also vulnerable to the very reason from which they exclusively stem and with which they have futilely attempted to be reconciled. Their common fatal failing is, of course, the fact that they have chosen to divorce themselves from Religion's ultimate mystical source, and have thereby divested themselves of its impregnable philosophic support. They, therefore, cannot convince man's mind, nor inspire his soul.

Shall I mention a few of these religious monstrosities in order to establish my just mentioned objection to all of them?

The Philosopher-God

Among these is your own humanly-detached Philosopher-God, to whom I have already referred. A fair example, I would say, of the God-conceptions of the later idealist philosophers, which generally go

under the name of the Absolute. And if the God-conceptions of some of these philosophers appear to be less humanly detached than your own, it is only because they have done more "mysticizing" on the subject than you have.

As to this entire Philosopher-God category, all I can soberly say is that if man were solely an intellectual creature, the Philosopher-God might well satisfy his full religious needs. Being also, however, among other things, a morally-aspiring personality, can anything less than the Prophetic vision of God as Moral Personality—with all the rich religious-moral implications which this vision contains—satisfy man's full religious aspirations? And may I remind you again that from the viewpoint of cold logic, your God as Aristocratic Supreme Intellect can no more be rationally vouched for than the Prophetic God as Moral Personality? Why, then, may not that basic human wisdom that is grounded in the deep mystical insights of the moral life, and is sounder, I am convinced, than the abstract logic of any intellectualist philosophic system,—why, then, may it not be fully justified in counselling man to tie his chariot to our more religiously satisfying vision of God as Moral Personality?

The Evolutionary God

For the same reason, this basic moral wisdom,

which, incidentally, our Biblical sages call *ḥokmah,* or moral wisdom, can and will never be permanently satisfied with the latter-day idea of an Evolutionary "Nisus," a finite-infinite, self-struggling, little-by-little-getting-stronger Evolutionary God.[16] However laudable, we, prophets, may find the pro-religious intentions and philosophic efforts of the exponents of a God who is slowly coming of age, as it were, we cannot help but wonder how such a God—even when characterized as Moral—can ever evoke man's religious awe and worship, or inspire the religious staying power that man's religious soul looks for in its God. The mystic insight of Prophetic faith, which is not slavishly dependent on the formulae of Logic, or on the "last word" of Science, but is grounded in the mystic depths of the moral life, we aver, can reach out beyond that caricature of a God who is a mere compromise with the scientific perspective of a particular age, whether it be, as in this case, with the modern all-pervasive Evolutionary perspective, or with some new scientific outlook that may come later. And what I have said of philosophic logic not by itself being able to prove the existence of your God as Reason, likewise applies to this Evolution-inspired monstrosity of a God. Even the existence of such a God that is hewn close to the Evolutionary thesis cannot be "proven" by the

formulae of Science or by the Syllogism of your philosophic logic. Why, then, should that mystically inspired human wisdom, of which I have spoken, that can do much better on the subject of God by virtue of its own deeper insights, be satisfied with much worse?

A Word As To Spinoza's God

It might be well to reiterate here that the Sage of Amsterdam, notwithstanding his all-out rationalism, felt impelled at the end of his *magnum opus* to define the highest kind of knowledge as *scientia intuitiva—intuitive* knowledge.[17] I feel confident that had Spinoza followed the lead of this great insight, his God-conception would have culminated into something more inspiring than a pious name for the "necessary concatenation of Nature" or the mathematical-mechanical way (*more geometrico*) in which the universe is supposed to operate, as one of his modern disciples has, perhaps correctly described it,[18] or into a mere logical or intellectual Term, as others understand it. An inspiring God-conception, indeed, for the religious soul of man!

To me, incidentally, it appears passing strange that notwithstanding the nobility of his character and his reputed Jobian patience, this great son of

my people should have felt so obviously embittered at the unfortunate treatment which he received at the hands of the seventeenth-century Amsterdam Jewish community, which, understandably enough, was both scandalized and worried by his "heretical" God-conception (God=Substance=Nature=*Body* and Mind!), as to go out of his way to be so philosophically ungenerous to our Prophetic God-conception. Granted that the great spiritual and moral essence of the latter was in his day enveloped in much unenlightened traditionalism, I nevertheless find it strange that this incisive thinker could not have plumbed deeper into our Prophetic God-conception, to the extent, at least, of recognizing it as one of the possible philosophic approaches to ultimate Reality, although not necessarily the one he himself favored. The overconfidence of his day in the ability of the new mathematical sciences to solve all the riddles of existence, apparently persuaded him, too, alas, that only the God that can be vouched for *more geometrico* can be the only possible God! Judging by our prophetic insight, our Sage has, alas, naively made his human reason assert too much! As regards his, as well as all other all-out rationalist philosophies, how applicable, indeed, Shakespeare's saying that there are more things in heaven and earth than are found in all our philosophic systems!

And The Other Modern Baalim

As for the totally "reductionist" varieties of the latter-day sorry substitutes for the Prophetic God: —God as an infinite number of divine entities (human, or possibly super-human, beings),[19] or Humanity,[20] or Nature, or God as the collective name for our human ideals, to mention but a few of the ever-increasing host of the latter-day *Baalim*—, what else can we, Prophets, say of them all but that they stand condemned before the bar of that deep human wisdom, of which I have spoken, for their utter religious uselessness to the spirit of man? If they do not tax human reason—a questionable achievement—they certainly grievously tax the human soul, a-hungering for something that is more religiously meaningful and helpful. They offer the spirit of man nothing, because prophetically barren, they have nothing religiously inspiring to offer.

I should add here that I note with great melancholy that some latter-day religious teachers of my own people are also indulging themselves, and for the same superficial reasons, in this unfortunate practice of emptying the vital religious meaning of our Prophetic vision of God.[21] To them I need only declare that in addition to the obvious wrong which they commit of feeding their flocks with stones in

the stead of bread, they prove themselves guilty of disloyalty to their people's traditional Prophetic Faith.

Mene, Mene, Tekel, U-Pharsin

Concerning all the aforementioned non-Prophetic Designs for Divinity, I am reminded of the famous handwriting on the wall, spoken of in our Biblical Book of Daniel:

> Thou art weighed in the balances, and
> art found wanting! (5.27.)

And they are all found wanting because they have divorced themselves from Religion's mystic source. Having disregarded the latter, they inevitably have had to do their all-out obeisance to Reason, by slavishly following its all-out rational decrees. And inevitably, too, all of them—even the few of them who have something religiously to offer—end up by satisfying neither Reason nor the religious soul of man. The just mentioned Biblical admonition goes on to say, in effect, that seeing that thy (the king of Babylon's) kingdom is divided, it is given over to a more worthy Power. Applying this literary allusion to our subject at hand, we, Prophets, would categorically make this solemn declaration: The fundamentally religious soul of man, after having had, in these modern days, its "liberal" but futile sprees with the gods of Reason and Science, and found

them wanting, will incisively realize that their kingdoms are divided—in other words, religiously bankrupt! Hence, their kingdoms must, of religious necessity, be given over to a more religiously worthy Power. Man's deeply religious soul, we aver, will, slowly but inevitably, return to its faith in our Prophetic God as Moral Personality, Whose reality is solidly anchored in the deep mysticism of man's soul and in its profound moral wisdom, and Who can fully answer to man's deepest religious needs.

The Philosopher Is A Bit Encouraging

I cannot help agreeing with you, my dear Jeremiah, that only that way of Philosophy which finds its inspiration in mysticism can do full justice to man's deepest religious needs. As you have well shown by the sorry examples of the New Designs for Deity, which even my own God-conception would hardly recognize, Reason, I must admit, as well as all the ways of philosophy which exclusively base themselves upon it, has by its very nature, the inevitable tendency of emptying Religion's apparently needed Prophetic richness. Philosophy, in the classic definition of the term, makes pretty poor theology. Poor Aristotle—I can hear you say—was a pretty good philosopher, but a poor theologian! The failing, alas, I imagine you continuing in this vein,

of all rationalist philosophers! But, my dear Jeremiah, Reason hath its many charms, especially to its modern devotees—its light, its clarity, its easily convincing logic, the increasing and enlightening revelations of its Science, and its tempting scepticism, with which it delights to challenge the grandiose claims of her elder mystic sister's far-flung theology. Perhaps, then, my dear Jeremiah, your additional observations—which I sense you are now about to make—on the attitude of Prophetic Religion toward Science—and this, I trust, you will also present in what you describe as your philosophically rambling, but which, I assure you, is a delightful and effective way—may further help toward humbling a bit the overweening pride of this glamorous mistress.

Thanks for your gracious encouragement, my dear Aristotle.

Prophetic Religion And Science—No Conflict Between Their Respective Functions

As I visualize Science and Religion from my present perspective, my dear Aristotle, I would say that Religion, as we prophets have defined and taught it, in absolute moral terms, as the doing of justice and loving of mercy and walking humbly with God,—Religion, as such, I say, by its very definition, need not and does not, when properly

understood, have any quarrel with the important task of Science. That task, as I understand it, is the search for more correct knowledge of the laws of Nature for the practical purpose of harnessing the forces of Nature, as well as for the joy of abstract knowledge as such.

What our Prophetic teaching insists on in this connection, is only that our increasing scientific knowledge and control of Nature must be made to serve the moral needs of man. It must, in other words, be applied to the greater establishment of justice and peace for all mankind. Otherwise, this greater knowledge and control of Nature can but hasten man's annihilation.

To date, man's scientific knowledge has dangerously outrun the constructively social application of that knowledge. The doom, then, which we, Prophets, have intoned over ancient Israel, Judea, Assyria, Egypt and Babylonia, for the failure of their ruling classes to practise justice and righteousness—to conduct their political economy in accordance with the inescapable requirements of the moral law—, that doom, we can now sadly pronounce again, and even more emphatically, upon the entire modern social order. Modern civilization, if not mankind itself, may also go the way of these ancient civilizations. As in the case of ancient Nineveh, modern society still has time to "repent" —by paying heed to our religiously inspired moral

message. The time of grace, however, is desperately short! Modern society may still escape atomic suicide, provided it proves itself courageous enough morally to harness the cosmic power of the atom to the moral uses of wider justice, and the resultant broader peace.

Outside of this important qualification on the part of Prophetic Religion concerning the task and mission of Science, Prophetic teaching can see no conflict between the essential task of Science and the essential mission of Prophetic Religion.

The Historic Conflict Between Organized Religion And Science

The conflict that historically did exist between Science and Organized Religion, or the Church, does not invalidate this thesis as far as Prophetic Religion is concerned. We Prophets, too, had our own furious battles with the organized religion of our times, though for different reasons. In our time, we were desperately bent on moralizing religion—on injecting therein a social conscience. A task, I sadly note, that is far from finished—nay, that is merely begun—even in these latter days.

Organized Religion's Cardinal Sins: The Cowardly Desire To Be "At Ease in Zion"

This last fact, incidentally, well explains the

fragile hold that organized religion has in these modern days on the socially-minded masses of mankind, including even great numbers among the church-affiliated. A Church—by which I mean here all organized religion—that sinfully chooses to sanctify the social *status quo,* out of the cowardly desire to be "at ease in Zion," that lacks the prophetic courage to go down into the Pit in behalf of the cause of that greater social justice for which modern mankind is desperately struggling, such a Church will gain not many prophetic converts for its God, notwithstanding its numberless imposing edifices, rich ritual, and other-wordly promises. Its religious leaders must become, as we, Prophets, have dared to be in our times, the militant *forerunners*—not the hesitant rear-guard—in the great prophetic struggles for a morally deeper and broader social order. From our Prophetic viewpoint, the sanctification of the social *status quo* on the part of the Church, is its first cardinal sin against Prophetic Religion.

Its Other Cardinal Sins: Intellectual Obtuseness And Little Faith!

This scandalous lack of *social* courage on the part of organized religion has been matched only, I must painfully declare, by its historic lack of

intellectual courage, concerning the new revelations of Science. I can well understand, but cannot condone, the intellectual obtuseness and panic-ridden fear that was displayed by Church leaders in the Age of Enlightenment, for instance, when they were confronted, let us say, with the naive and brash announcement of an astronomer of that scientifically sanguine, decidedly superficial Age of Reason, that he had scoured the heavens through the lenses of his telescope but could find no God there! If Science can thus read God out of the universe—so ran the panic-stricken logic of the Church leaders—then, a religious war to the death against Science!

We, Prophets, coming to our mystic awareness of our God out of the depths of our moral experiences, find these bigoted Church battlers against Science, in the name of Religion, guilty of two more cardinal sins. I have in mind, firstly, the cardinal sin of intellectual obtuseness. How futile, to say nothing of how wrong, to have attempted to stifle the God-given faculty of reason in its beneficent mission of affording man more correct knowledge of, and, thereby, greater power over, the forces of Nature! And I have in mind, also, the cardinal sin of revealing themselves, by their cowardly fear of Science, as men of little faith! Prophetic faith, indeed, is made of tougher stuff!

The Goddess Of Reason Hath Her Charms, But Her Wisdom Goeth Not Beyond Agnosticism

Our prophetic wisdom, directing its perception into the real nature and competence of Science, fails to see how its increasing revelations ever did or ever could negate the validity of our prophetic insights. I recall, of course, that there have been some sanguine scientists, in the dawn of the modern scientific era, who were deadly sure of their atheism, who even loudly boasted of it, and were proudly content to replace the Prophetic God of the Ages with the spasmodically more attractive Goddess of Reason.

Time, however, I note, has brought greater wisdom,—and what more laudable function, indeed, can Time have! The farthest, I dare say, that a thoughtful scientist or philosopher, who happens to be temperamentally or otherwise unsympathetic to the religious thesis, will venture forth in the late modern era, is the depressingly uninviting door of Agnosticism. He is intellectually prepared to say, in effect: "May be!" It may be that there is a prophetically-conceived God in the Universe, though Science, he sternly hastens to add, knows nothing of such a Being. He himself, is, of course, definitely inclined to doubt the possibility thereof. But, he argues, as does, in effect, the modern phil-

osophic preacher on "The Dark Side of Religion": "Well, if there is a God or Gods, let us not worry about them! For, it is surely beneath their dignity (thus reverting to your Greek aristocratic idea on this matter) to trouble themselves with the petty goings-on of mankind!"[22] Where this sage obtained this gratuitous information, he, of course, does not say! Soberly noting, time and again, as he does, and must, in his various works, the eternal limitations of human knowledge, this sage and other like-minded agnostics cannot, unlike earlier anti-religious enthusiasts, allow themselves, as much as they would like to, the intellectual luxury of declaring themselves out-and-out atheists.

The Eminently Useful, But Limited, Province Of Science—

As we Prophets soberly evaluate the function of Science, we note its eminently useful but limited province. It does and must confine itself to the world of the tangible — to that peripheral part of reality that can be measured and weighed and logically inferred. Thus, despite all the tremendous accumulation of useful knowledge on the part of Science, the modern sober philosopher of Science, if not the more philosophically acute scientist himself, is perceptive enough to realize—and honest enough to admit—that the farthest-

reaching findings of Science touch, not the heart, but only the *structure* of things. He finds that the hard-won scientific knowledge, gained through the scientific method, does not and cannot plumb the depths of the ultimate reality of our universe; that its world-picture, if and when it bothers to draw one, describes only the externals of reality, but not its *substance*. He finds, in sum, that, thanks to its very nature and method, Science must, and does, fall short of ultimate reality.

I took issue earlier, eminent sir, with the exponents of the "modern temper" for their unperceptive and unwise disparagement of the essential dignity of man. There is one item, however, in their all-out "newer" and "deeper" scepticism, as to which I see eye to eye with them. I refer to their sober and disillusioning suspicion of the peripheral knowledge of our universe, revealed in all the multitudinous, abstract and complicated formulae of Science.[23] A disillusioning thought, indeed, for the modern worshippers of Science! Not, however, let me hasten to add, for the mystically prophetic soul.

—And The Mystic Insight Of The Artist, Poet And Prophet

Some of these modern thinkers, at least, are beginning to perceive that if the ultimate substance

of our universe is to be reached by man at all, it must be *divined,* rather than scientifically understood. Divined, that is, by some sort of mystical insight—the mystical discernment of the artist, the poet, or the prophet. The prophet, for one, seeks that Reality in the spiritual depths of personality—in that "still small voice," in that "moral law within," in the mystic implications of those commanding inner propulsions in the soul of man that impel him to a sacrificial life of moral nobility. Out of that world the prophetic eye elicits insights of spiritual realities to which Science must forever remain a stranger.

Science And Religion—Two Different Worlds Of Discourse

What the prophet, then, would mean by the much belabored statement that there is no conflict between Religion and Science, is not that philosophically untenable proposition that Religion can be substantiated or "proven" by Science, but rather—to use again that modern philosophic expression, but in a special sense—that the two are entirely of different worlds of discourse. The things that are proven in a certain way in Science —by the accepted scientific method—are "proven" in quite another and entirely different way in Religion. Science and Religion do not conflict, for

the simple reason that they operate in two different spheres.

—Though Their Ultimate Aims Are The Same

Their ultimate *aim,* however, when properly understood and applied, is the same:—the greater welfare of man. The ultimate aim of Science is to enable man better to understand and therefore better to control the forces of Nature for his greater good; the ultimate aim of Religion is to enable man to seek and find his God through the depth and breadth of moral living, and in this promising search to find such a Moral Companionship in his universe as may give him the desperately needed courage and hope and confidence to make his life worth living, despite its inevitable struggles, strife and disillusionment; despite bereavement, senescence, martyrdom, death. And who will be rash enough to deny, in the face of our own exulting experience, that our prophetic insights have failed to furnish us with that Staff of Life?

The Philosopher Suggests An Uncompromising Compromise

Your thoughtful dual conviction, my dear Jere-

miah, that reason and science touch only the structure or periphery but not the substance of reality, and that the mystical insight can and does favor us with an insight into the rationally elusive substance of things that brings man greater illumination and joy and power, emerges as an effective challenge to the would-be undogmatic thinker to un-dogmatize his thinking on both these weighty subjects of reason and the mystical insight. Your persuasive thesis makes him challengingly aware of the fact that the classically Hellenic philosophic viewpoint is but another article of faith. A glorious and illuminating faith, to be sure, but, in the last analysis, still a postulate of faith in the ultimate reasonableness of reason itself and in its all-sufficiency. For him, it must remain an open question as to whether what Science or Reason increasingly reveals to us is really *all* that there is to Reality. He must recognize that there is certainly a *possibility* that there may be more to it than Reason and its scientific disciplines can ever completely fathom. To him it must also remain an open question as to whether the mystical insights of the poet and the saint and the prophet cannot, as Mysticism claims, capture a more immediate and deeper vision of Reality. Reason, of course, cannot get out of its skin, as it were, to disprove such a possibility.

As to the question of the validity of the said

mystical insights, it is difficult to disregard your very pointed reminder of their pervasive presence in almost all the varied activities of man, and, not the least, in the activities of those individuals who are either unaware of their ubiquitous presence or who dogmatically choose to deny or disparage them. When our would-be undogmatic thinker takes account, especially, of the primordial sources of these mystical insights, sources surely more primary than the mind, and becomes aware, moreover, of the illumination and the joy and the power which these insights bring to them who vouch for their reality, then he must consider it unwise even for the Hellenic devotee of reason to leave them out of his reckoning, or, even, to question summarily the mystic's competence to properly interpret them. For all we know, these vouched-for mystic insights may be nearer the sources of Life and Reality than the knowledge we ploddingly gather from our scientific and logical formulae.

Perhaps, then, the undogmatic thing to do—and this, your thesis eloquently suggests—is to reach for an enlightened compromise on these two faiths, as you properly insist on calling them. A compromise which, paradoxically enough, need not compromise the high usefulness of either. Namely, to perceptively recognize, as, I note, a modern naturalistic philosopher actually does,[24] the unique but

complementary function of each in the full-orbed life of man. Our various scientific and intellectual disciplines need not captiously attempt to deny or disregard the deep universal sources of inspiration and joy and power which our mystical insights afford us, but can rather wisely and helpfully assist in conserving and intelligently organizing them in the interest of a richer and more hopeful life for man.

The Modern Laocoön

Keeping in mind, then, this not-at-all impossible, and desirable, compromise, I would say, my dear Jeremiah, as I have intimated earlier, that your persuasive plea for a little more mysticism on the part of the modern, especially on the part of the *disillusioned* modern, is a healthy challenge for him to a deeper and more confident life. And I don't know why, despite my devotion to, and high regard for, the Hellenic faith in reason, I cannot visualize the possibility that your sober message may not yet prove to be the liberating word for him. You behold the disillusioned modern—to use an Hellenic figure—as a highly intellectualized Laocoön, needlessly enshackled, from head to foot, with the suffocating serpentine chains of his rationalism and scientific determinism. You offer him the challenging counsel to cease looking upon

the all-out intellectualist ways of philosophy as his only legitimate approach to Reality. You ask him to give some sober consideration to the possible validity of the mystical insight as another legitimate way of coming to terms with the universe. This, you ask him in the inspired conviction that he may thereby be enabled to free himself from his self-inflicted intellectual enshacklement and begin to breathe the wholesome air of spiritual freedom and its deep, mystically religious possibilities of an Ultimate Reality in terms of a Prophetic Moral Companionship. In view of all that has been said, my dear Jeremiah, I cannot see why, upon my second-Elysian-look on the subject, I cannot honestly join you in your fond hope that the wise among the moderns may not daringly accept your challenge without fear of ultimately compromising their philosophic or scientific integrity.

The Jobian Problem

As prophet, I am grateful, indeed, for these encouraging words. And now, my dear Aristotle, as I am approaching the end of my task, I can find no more fitting way to conclude it than by dwelling for a while on what I may properly call the Jobian Problem—the religious problem of innocent human suffering—since in our Biblical literature this problem is highlighted by the fictional

character of Job, the spiritual hero of our Biblical Book of Job. No more fitting subject, I believe, for the following good reasons:

To start with, the treatment of this problem by our Biblical sages will bring to your mind the fact that our Biblical theists were not so unphilosophical as to overlook the fact that our Prophetic faith has its very serious problems. Yes, so serious as to require some satisfactory solution in order that the prophetic soul may, not blindly but thoughtfully, continue to dwell at peace with that faith. Again, the sublime religious treatment of the problem, given in this immortal book—perhaps the greatest product of the Hebrew religious genius—will more effectively, because more dramatically, reveal our Prophetic philosophy, which I have attempted to outline here. For it will show how the prophetic soul successfully lives out his Prophetic faith under fire. Which is another way of saying that our Prophetic faith, though difficult indeed, evinces unique staying power, even *in extremis!* Finally, you will find that Job's solution of the great problem loyally follows the aforedescribed Prophetic, moral-mystic, approach to the God-idea, and for that reason succeeds in being influentially convincing, despite the fact that it admits the rationally inexplicable nature of the problem.

Yes, we prophets readily admit that the Problem of Suffering, which is part of the larger Problem of Evil, cannot be solved, theistically, on purely rational grounds. There is, of course, the Problem of Good, so, felicitously, called by a modern philosopher.[25] He has in mind, of course, the many facts of Nature conveniently overlooked or minimized, significantly enough, by the religious sceptic, which definitely operate for the growth and well-being of man, as well as for the rest of vital creation, and logically suggest Purpose. Granted the reality of the Problem of Good, there, unfortunately, still remains the Problem of Evil, which, to others, suggests a contrary hypothesis. Faced with this eternal "antimony"—as the Sage of Königsberg convincingly called it—the one who lacks our Prophetic moral faith is doomed to give up the prophetic battle of religious hope —and hastens to compose *The Modern Temper,* spending the rest of his days regaling himself with the melancholy delights of the "newer scepticism."

Not so—and more wisely, according to our prophetic lights—the man of prophetic faith! He chooses rather to carry on his personal, moral battle on the lines clearly indicated by the inspired author of the Book of Job, and vindicated by the incisive wisdom of the ages.

The Book Of Job

From my several earlier references, my dear Aristotle, to our Book of Job, you have, no doubt, already obtained something of the essence of the message, humanly lifting and religiously inspiring, of this profound book. For the good reasons, just mentioned, however, it should be worth our while, if it is pleasing to you, to dwell in some detail on this soul-searching dramatic poem, appropriately enough included in the Wisdom literature of our Bible.

Let me assure you, my dear Jeremiah, that this will be pleasing to me, indeed, if for no other reason than that I am inclined to agree with you that your exposition of the problem of this reputedly the greatest book of your people's Bible will dramatically round out your Argument.

What I might add in this connection is that the little I have thus far heard here of this book—and this information, judging from your earlier references thereto, might well be quite misleading—is that it is a sort of Hebrew version of the Greek myth of Prometheus. You have no doubt heard of that strange, humanity-loving demi-God, who stole the Heavenly fire and gave it to man. For this Divine *Lèse Majesté,* Zeus had him undergo the most cruel of sufferings. Characteristic aristocratic jealousy, I can hear you say, my dear Jeremiah, of

a Greek God for the Divine Rights of the Gods!

I note, by the way, that a modern philosopher finds in this myth quite a far-flung inspiration for what he calls a new Promethean God-conception and a new Promethean Religion for the Modern Man. Not only does he find his Promethean God, whom he characterizes as a sort of Finite-Infinite Moral Being (finite in Power but infinite in Mind), more intellectually inspiring for the modern and future human demi-gods than your Jobian-Prophetic God, but he finds also in that God-conception of his a more rationally appealing answer to the Problem of Evil than the one proferred by your Book of Job. To top it all, my dear Jeremiah, is his assertion that your good Job, despite all his Jobian courage, yielded at last by surrendering right to Might, while, on the other hand, Prometheus, as he envisions him, succeeded in keeping his spirit free despite all the Tyrant's tortures.[26]

This is all very interesting, my dear Aristotle. I have already made, as you recall, my brief comments on this and the other Evolution-inspired Gods, and have nothing to add thereto. As for this philosopher's allegation that Job in the end yields by surrendering right to Might, my exposition of the Jobian drama will, I believe, show that such an unjust claim can only be derived from an unscholarly and prophetically uninspired reading of this perennially inspiring book.

The Prologue In Heaven—Its Lofty, Universal Outlook

Let me recall to you, eminent sir, the morally intriguing drama, related in the Prologue of this book—the so-called Prologue in Heaven (Chapters 1 and 2). There dwelt, we are told, in the land of Uz, a man by the name of Job, equally renowned far and wide for his great wealth and—shall I say strangely enough?—also for his exemplary piety. The land of Uz, it should be noted, was a fictional non-Hebrew country, neighboring ancient Judea, and Job was not a Hebrew. This significant fact at once lifts Job's problem to a lofty, universal level. The problem, in other words, is not merely that of the individual righteous Hebrew, but of Man, which reveals at once the broadly human outlook of its Hebrew author.

Chapter 31 *As An Historic Document Of The Exalted Content Of The Ancient Hebrew Ethic*

In Chapter 31 of the Book of Job, I should like to note, is to be found an inspiring catalogue of Job's virtues, given by Job not in the spirit of self-righteousness but for the sole purpose of establishing his Argument. This catalogue includes Job's kindness even to his enemies, his intensely demo-

cratic behavior even with his servants, his deep sympathies for the poor and the down-trodden, and his generous help of them, his profound passion for social justice, and his lofty moral standards as to woman-kind. It includes, in short, all the supreme virtues of our Prophetic teaching, which had already become part and parcel of the moral tradition of my people at this early period—about four hundred years before the Christian era—when the Book of Job was written. An eloquent witness, indeed, of the lofty standards of the ancient Hebrew Ethic! Alas, that half a millenium later, the champions of the new Christian religion, that came forth out of the Jewish womb, should, in their apostolic zeal for their new Faith, have chosen to belittle this great Ethic and to deny their great indebtedness thereto and to its Job-like people!

The Prophetic Conviction Of Man's Moral Dignity

Job, in short, was the supreme delight of both man and God. But not of the arch cynic—the Satan! The latter, incidentally, had not yet become the cosmic Power of Evil of the later Christian tradition. He was then of but equal rank with the many other ministering angels of God. His job, however, then—that of a sort of Heavenly watchdog over the mortals on earth—was apparently

good preparation for his later role of Arch Rebel and Scoundrel. It goes without saying that it was none other than the Satan who chose to question Job's moral integrity. The Satan, it appears, had lately made one of his routine inspection tours among the mortals on earth. One day, when the ministering angels presented themselves before God, the Satan was amongst them. When the latter's turn came to be interrogated, God asked him:

> Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a wholehearted and upright man, one that revereth God, and shunneth evil?

Characteristically enough, the Satan answered:

> Doth Job worship God for nought? Hast not Thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions are increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, surely, he will blaspheme Thee to Thy face! (1.8-11.)

God, even like our author, was, of course, convinced of the moral integrity of man, whom, as our Prophetic tradition has it, He formed in His own moral likeness. In order to prove the Satan in the wrong—for the special benefit, no doubt, of all the sceptics and cynics of the ages—God found

himself compelled to permit the Satan to deprive Job, in turn, of all his wealth and his children, and, when this failed to unseat Job's piety, God empowered the Satan to strike Job with the incurable disease of black leprosy:—

> In spite of all this Job did not sin, nor impute blame to God! (1.22.)

And this, notwithstanding the further mortal provocations hailing from Job's sharp-tongued spouse. As in one of those bleak, pessimistic tragedies of Eugene O'Neil, the Satan, although having made short shrift of all of Job's children, cleverly contrived, in order to add fire to Job's exasperation, to let her remain on the scene. And, to be sure, she did her job well:—

> Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity?
> Curse God and die! (2.9.)

But Job's reply to her was as significant as it is justly famous. Indeed, it was very fittingly, I note, incorporated into the funeral service of later Jewish tradition:—

> Thou speakest as an impious woman might speak! Should we accept the good at God's hand, and not the evil? (2.10.)

To the gratification, then, of God and of all good mortals, the cynical Satan loses the great Heavenly wager, as it were. Judging from Job's experiences, at least, there *is* disinterested piety—

there *is* fundamental moral integrity on the part of man! How could it be otherwise, seeing, as I mentioned earlier, that man, according to our Prophetic faith, was formed in God's own Moral Image? As all truly good men know, the truly pious or moral man liveth by the principle so nobly stated by one of our early Talmudic sages:

> Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a gratuity; be rather like servants who serve their master with no expectation of receiving a gratuity.
>
> (Abot 1.3.)

Or, as the other equally famous phrase of our Talmudic sages has it, the truly noble man practises virtue *le-shemah*: for its own sake, or *le-shem Shamaim*: for the sake of Heaven, or God.

Hebrew Ethical Monotheism's Very Own Problem —The Suffering Of The Righteous

Man, then—in the person of Job—morally triumphs! But how about the Prophetic God, Himself? Can the devastating calamities that have overtaken Job,—can, in other words, this challenging fact of the suffering of the righteous, be reconciled with Job's life-long Prophetic belief in a God of Justice? In a God, moreover, Who, in accordance with our strict Hebrew Monotheism, is One, and not only supreme in Justice but also in Power?

Among The Easier "Solutions" Of The Problem

You note, eminent sir, that our sages, as I indicated earlier, were not at all unaware of the mighty problem with which our Hebrew Ethical Monotheism has conspicuously confronted them. In our monotheistic philosophy, there is no convenient *Ahriman* to save the ethical virtue of an *Ormuzd.* Such Dualism, indeed, makes it easier to "solve" the Problem of Evil. In our Prophetic view, however, it does so only superficially. It, moreover, detracts from what we believe to be the only religiously satisfying conception of God: a God, Supreme in Justice and Unity, or Soleness of Authority. Only such a God, in our view, inspires real worship!

Later generations made the "solution" of this problem easier by transferring the reward of the suffering righteous to another life. This otherworldly "solution" did not enter into our author's "solution" of the problem. And for the simple reason that when this book was written, the idea of the Resurrection of the Dead—the ancient Hebrew version of your Greek, philosophically-phrased, idea of spiritual immortality—had not yet become an established belief in Israel. This idea was very likely in the air, as it were, during our author's time, but Job took no cognizance of it. In fact—as the modern Biblical scholars, I note, correctly

state—he denied it (cf. 7.9-10; 14.10-12, 14). Had he, however, granted the possibility of personal spiritual survival—a very logical corollary, incidentally, of our Prophetic conception of the transcendent reality of human personality—it is very likely that Job would not have considered it as a satisfactory solution of his problem. With the Russian Dostoievsky, he would have, no doubt, exclaimed that he cannot possibly live in a world where there is no Justice, *here* and *now!* As for himself, he must search and find a more religiously satisfying solution,—and within the very framework of Prophetical Ethical Monotheism!

Job's Three Friends Futilely Come To God's Rescue—

Of course, for Job's three good but simple-minded friends, who avowedly came to comfort him in his trouble, this stark problem—as we learn from the great Dialogue, following the Prologue in Heaven—turned out to be no great problem at all! Pious but simple men that they were, they were naturally more concerned with the defense—no matter how specious—of their God than with showing sympathy for their friend's abysmal suffering, or with attempting to understand the searching problem that it presented to his troubled mind.

—By The Aid Of The Dogma Of Retributive Justice

Job's friends were fanatic traditionalists. And the supreme dogma of their day, which had already begun to take shape in my own day, over two hundred years before Job's time, was the dogma of individual retributive justice. This doctrine had it that God unfailingly rewards every individual with material prosperity, good health and long life for his righteous conduct, and punishes him with adversity for his evil doings. Replacing, as it did, the more primitive idea of group or collective responsibility, according to which the individual, whether innocent or guilty, suffered for the sins of the whole community, this new doctrine of individual retributions was obviously an advance over the older belief. But this new doctrine, like all more or less good theories when dogmatically or unreflectively interpreted, resulted in many mischievous inferences. One of those, following from my younger contemporary's, the prophet Ezekiel's, extreme interpretation, to the effect that there is no punishment without sin (Ezek. 18 and 33.12-20), had it that prosperity was always the sure sign of an individual's virtue, and, what was even more mischievous, that adversity was the certain proof of one's guilt!

The first part of this extreme interpretation of

the retributive-justice theory is well illustrated by the bald declaration of one of our psalmists:—

> I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. (Ps. 37.25.)

The second part of this interpretation is graphically evident in the ancient reference to an adversity-stricken individual—especially one who was afflicted with an incurable disease—as "one stricken of God."

"Wherefore Doth the Way of the Wicked Prosper?"

Long before the time of the author of the Book of Job, I, for one, was compelled to question this dogma, in the following query, which I, in great perplexity of soul, addressed to our Prophetic God:—

> Righteous wouldest Thou be, O Lord,
> Were I to contend with Thee,
> Yet will I reason with Thee:—
> Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?
> Wherefore are all they secure that deal very treacherously? (Jer. 12.1.)

Job's Problem Of The Ages

It is this very problem that troubled the per-

ceptive author of the Book of Job, and inspired him to write his great drama of the soul. And it troubled him, in fact, in an incisively more immediate and personal way than it possibly would have any equally saintly and mentally alert thinker during my times. For, among other reasons, this doctrine, as I have already indicated, had already become in our author's day an established belief. It was, in fact, naively raised to the stature of a divine cosmic principle—*the* principle, that is, by which God was imagined to rule the world. Little, finite man was not wise enough in Job's day—and has he become wiser since?—to realize that it is beyond man's finite knowledge to divine the ultimate principle by which the Infinite God operates His world-economy. To question this dogma in Job's days, was obviously rank blasphemy. It was tantamount to the very questioning of God's Providence! Job's acutely eloquent arguments against the tenability of this dogma, developed by him in his dialogues with his friends, following the Prologue in Heaven, could not, then, but identify him in the eyes of his tradition-bound friends as a rebel against Divine Providence. Indeed, his arguments on the subject, even as they became cumulative and more eloquent, only tended to transform his friends' initial suspicion of Job's guilt into certainty. Thus while his friends, in their earlier replies to Job's pleas in behalf of his in-

nocence, only covertly hinted at Job's guilt, and, in fact, held out hope for him in the event of his repentance, in their later replies to him, they openly accused him—the most widely-renowned righteous man of his age—of the most heinous of crimes!

Fanaticism Reasons Not—Only Suspects

His friends' suspicions of Job are already suggested at the end of the second chapter of the Prologue. A careful reading of those verses (vv. 11-13) reveals that his three friends, who had avowedly come to comfort Job in his adversity, remained only to accuse him. There we learn:—

> But when they looked from a distance and could not recognize him, they raised their voice and wept, and rent each his robe, and strewed dust over their heads by casting it heavenward. (This signified not an act of grief on their part at Job's misfortunes, but rather represented the ancient ritual of warding off from themselves the curse that was supposed to have fallen upon Job for his sins.) And they sat beside him for seven days and seven nights without any one speaking a word to him, for they saw that the affliction (of black leprosy) was very great (that it, in other words, indicated, in accordance with the said

traditional dogma, correspondingly great guilt).

No wonder, then, that the first sentence which introduces Job's first speech, and sets the pace for those stirring Dialogues between himself and his three friends, dramatically informs us:—

> Whereupon Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. (3.1.)

We note, then, that Job had a double portion of suffering as his lot—not only the physical and mental suffering consequent upon the loss of his prosperity, his children, and his health, but also his even more painful spiritual suffering. The latter resulted from the utter lack of sympathy for his terrible afflictions, on the part of his closest friends.

This lack of sympathy, clearly and painfully enough, convinced Job that his friends, blinded by the logic of the aforementioned sacrosanct dogma, actually cast doubt upon the noble integrity of his life, and that they consequently regarded his great tragedy as a condign divine visitation upon him for heinous sins, of which, they should have known, their righteous Job could never have been guilty.

From the specious reasoning of such doughty fanatics, it soon became evident to Job, he could expect little, if any, help in his painful search for a satisfactory religious solution for the problem of innocent suffering, which now so intimately and

dramatically revealed itself to his deeply probing mind. That quest was thus to become for Job, of necessity, a lone spiritual odyssey—a battle, in other words, with his own soul.

The thoughtful reader of this book realizes that our author really conceived his spiritual drama essentially as the individual's inner battle with himself on the problem of the tenability of his traditional faith, when, at that dangerous crossroad, he is compelled to take account of crucial experiences which mortally challenge that faith. Seen thus, Job's friends represent, not only the narrow theology of their day, but also Job's earlier theology. Job's controversies with his friends may thus be regarded as the poignant inner struggles of the new and deeper Job with his old self, in an attempt to set his deeply religious soul at home again in the midst of what now appeared to be a religiously shattered universe.

But to return to our *dramatis personae* as given. No matter how profoundly and convincingly Job argued against his friends' specious arguments by which they labored to defend their traditional dogma of retribution, it was all futile. Nay, as we have already observed, Job's powerful counter-arguments only tended to deepen his friends' earlier suspicions into a positive conviction of his guilt. Particularly, his stubborn refusal to admit his lack of integrity, even for the sake of saving, as it were, the good name of God!

Man's Unconquerable Dignity

Indeed, this last—his soul's integrity—Job would not surrender even if God himself should slay him!—

If he killeth me—well and good!
I have nothing to hope for.
Only my conduct I desire to
justify to His face!
Behold, I have set forth a just case,
I know that I am guiltless.
Who dare gainsay me?
Verily then I should have to die in silence.
(13.15,18-19.)

As God liveth, who hath robbed me of my right,
The Almighty, who hath grieved my soul,
As long as my spirit is within me,
The breath of God in my nostrils,
Verily, my lips shall not speak untruth,
Nor my tongue utter falsehood.
God forbid that I concede that ye are right!
Till I die, I will not part with my integrity.
My righteousness, I hold fast,
And will not let it go.
My heart need not blame any of my days.
(27.2-6.)

What a daringly inspiring defense, this, of the fundamental dignity of the human spirit—so fun-

damental to our Prophetic philosophy! And how this divinely stubborn conviction of his helped Job in the end, as we shall see, to regain, nay, to deepen his sorely shaken Prophetic faith!

"Can Mortal Be Just In The Presence Of God?"

It goes without saying that his good but Tradition-bound friends were prepared with rejoinders sanctified by tradition.

To counter Job's uncompromising insistence on the integrity of his life, and, consequently, on the injustice of his suffering in the light of their own retributive-justice dogma, his friends came forward with the plausible, time-honored idea:—

> Can mortal be just in the presence of God?
> Can man be pure before his Maker? (4.17.)

By which his friends, of course, meant that no man, realizing, as he must, his human imperfections, has the right, however righteous, to consider himself sinless before the All-Righteous God. And this must be true even of Job, whether he is aware of his sins or not. Hence, the justness of Job's present visitations.

"Doth It Become Thee To Crush (Me)?"

To this, Job perceptively replies that since God

chose to make man morally frail or imperfect, it would become Him the more to be more forgiving of him, rather than constantly punishing man for his inherent frailty with cruel suffering:—

> Doth it become Thee to crush,
> And to despise the work of Thy hands?

"The Innocent And The Guilty Alike—"

His friends' dogma of retributive justice insists that God conducts the destiny of man in accordance with Justice. But, asks Job, do not his own experiences, as well as his general observations of the human scene, challenge the validity of this age-old belief? Do Nature's scourges discriminate between the just and unjust, between the innocent and the guilty?—

> Innocent am I! . . . Yet it is all the same!
> Therefore do I maintain,
> The innocent and the wicked alike doth He annihilate.
> If the scourge slayeth its victims suddenly,
> He mocketh at the despair of the innocent.
> (10.3, cf. vv. 12-15; 9.21-23.)

"The Tyrant Liveth Long—"

Job's friends argue that while it is true that the wicked may be temporarily prosperous, they are sooner or later overtaken by condign punishment.

But, counters Job, is it not rather true that the wicked continue to revel in power, honor, and prosperiy to the end of their wicked lives? Are they not honored even after death?—

Wherefore do the wicked live,
Grow old, yea, wax mighty in power?
Their posterity is established with them,
Their offspring flourish before their eyes;
Their houses are safe from disaster,
The rod of God descendeth not upon them.
How often is it that the light of the wicked
is extinguished,
Or that calamity befalleth them,
That God distributeth sorrows to them in
His anger?
The tyrant liveth long, he remaineth in his
strength;
He enjoyeth safety and is full of hope,
And the eyes of God watch over his ways.
(21.7-9,17; 24.22-23.)
Nay, he is carried to the grave in pomp,
And every man followeth his bier.
The clods of the valley are sweet unto him,
And care is taken of his tomb. (21.32-33.)

"The Poor Of The Land Must Hide . . .
Yet God Taketh No Umbrage!"

Among the wickedness that is allowed to go on

in the world, Job points up—and in the true Prophetic tradition—the heart-rending oppression and exploitation of the masses of the poor and the disenfranchised of his day:—

The poor of the land must hide.
Lonely as wild asses in the wilderness,
They go forth to their labor;
They must hunt the desert for sustenance,
There is no harvest of their own for the homeless.
They must harvest fields that are not theirs,
The vineyard of the tyrant they must pick clean.
Naked must they pass the night for lack of clothes;
They have no covering to protect them from the cold.
From the downpour of the mountains they are drenched,
They must embrace the bare rock for want of shelter.
They must go naked, without garments,
Hungry, they must carry the sheaves.
Shut in by walls they must press the oil,
Thirsty, they must press the winepress.
Out of the city come the groans of the dying,
And the cries of the souls of the slain, calling for vengeance—
Yet God taketh no umbrage! (24.4-12.)

"Where, Then, Is My Hope?"

In their desperate attempts to defend their untenable dogma against Job's mighty shafts, Job's three friends, it should be noted, all argued alike, despite their varied verbiage. This is equally true, by the way, of the would-be fourth "friend"— Elihu—a later interpolator—who apparently felt that Job's original three friends had not done a completely satisfactory job. Proceeding, then, with their common argument, his friends remind Job that if he would but repent, if he would only renounce his integrity, and confess his secret guilt, God would surely forgive him and restore him to his former estate. The perceiving and honest Job, however, retorts that, aside from his intellectual and moral inability to declare himself in the wrong, there could possibly be no hope for a favorable change in his lot, seeing that the laws of Nature are unchangeable, and he is stricken with an incurable disease. All he can look forward to is the silent grave:—

> Where, then, is my hope?
> And who can see happiness for me?
> To the bars of Sheol will they go down
> When together we sink into the grave.
>
> (17.15-16.)

And that the grave is the end, in Job's view, we have already had occasion to indicate:—

But when a man dieth, no vital spark is left;
If a mortal passeth away, where is there a
trace of him?
As the water disappeareth from the sea,
And the river drieth up and vanisheth,
So when a man dieth, he doth not rise again.
Even should the heavens be no more,
He will not awake, nor stir from his sleep.
(14.10-12, and cf. ibid. v. 14 and 7.9-10.)

The End Of Theism?

Were not Job, or our author, the prophetic soul that he was, this annihilating moral indictment of the world order would have surely spelled to his mind the doom, not only of the traditional dogma of retributive justice, but of theism itself. But note the philosophically and, above all, the religiously, intriguing thing about Job's discourses. The latter reveal that no matter how bitterly Job rebels —and there is nothing gained by arguing, as some over-sensitive religious souls do, that he does not[27] —no matter how Job rebels against the God that so often appears as mere relentless Omnipotence in Nature, and often, even in History, Job, in the same breath continues to appeal to his *other* God, as it were. Yes, to his good old Prophetic God—the sure intimations of whose existence, Job appears never to have lost awareness of in the depths of his own,

profoundly moral soul. *That* God, Job is desperately trying to reach in the midst and despite of his present physically hopeless and spiritually perplexing lot. Indeed, that God, Job was all along certain, must and will somehow, notwithstanding all the ostensibly incriminating misfortunes that He sent upon him, make Himself re-assuringly evident! To the extent, at least, of vindicating his faithful servant's integrity before his accusing "friends"—and the world.

"But I Know That My Redeemer Liveth!"

Thus, despite his mordant indictment of the world order, Job exclaims:

> But I know that my Redeemer liveth,
> And that at last He will appear on earth.
> Even after my skin hath been torn from my flesh,
> Still will I cherish the hope that I shall see God.
> The heart in my bosom pineth
> That I may see Him, a champion in my behalf.
> That mine eyes may see Him, and not as an enemy. (19.25-27.)

And to this moral God, thanks to the very integrity of his life, the righteous Job feels completely justified in presenting his case and bitter com-

plaints, however scandalous this appeared to his fanatical friends. Only the wicked dare not, nay, cannot do this. This incisive realization, in fact, has been Job's only comfort in his great suffering:—

> This, indeed, hath been my comfort,
> For the godless cannot approach Him!
> (13.16.)

"My Servant Job"

And, to be sure, this God, of whose pervasive reality Job, in the depths of his moral personality, never lost awareness, is perceptively made by our author to appear dramatically on the human scene to make that humanly lifting vindication of Job before his three accusing friends—and the world. In that highly inspiring passage of the last chapter of this book, we read:

> After Job hath spoken all these words, God said to Eliphaz: "My wrath is roused against thee and thy two friends, because ye have not spoken truthfully to Me as hath My servant Job. Now, take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to My servant Job and offer up burnt offerings for yourselves; and My servant Job shall pray for you. Verily, it is because I respect him that I brand you not as infamous for not having spoken truthfully to Me like My servant Job. (42.7-8.)

"But Where Is Wisdom To Be Found?"— A Perennially Timely Message

Very significantly, we note, not a word is said by Job's God, in this great vindication of Job, in explanation of His tacit acknowledgement of Job's innocent suffering. God's just-cited rebuke of Job's friends, however, for not having "spoken truthfully to Me as hath My servant Job," is significantly preceded by the unique "speech," which our author puts into the mouth of God, and which God delivers, "amidst the storm," at the outset of His dramatic appearance. The great religious message, as well as the philosophic implications, of this famous discourse remains the same, incidentally, whether it was, in its original form, addressed directly to Job, as our present Hebrew text has it, or to Job's friends, as an inspiringly thoughtful modern Jewish scholar contends.[28] The great message of God's speech, found, in the main, in Chapters 38-40, eloquently points up to man the lesson, which, I daresay, is as timely in the so-called modern days as it was in Job's own day. I refer to its challenging insistence on the idea of the ineffable infinitude of God's Creative Wisdom as compared with the woefully finite reason of man, and to the fitting humility and hope-laden faith which the complete realization thereof must needs afford the troubled but aspiring spirit of man:—

Where wast thou when I founded the earth?
Tell if thou hast understanding! . . .
Hast thou ever given orders to the morning,
Assigned to the dawn its place . . .?
Have the gates of death been opened to
thee? . . .
Canst thou tie the lustrous band of the
Pleiades,
Or loose the girdle of Orion? . . .
Is it by thy wisdom that the hawk
soareth? . . .
Is it by thy command that the eagle
mounteth? . . .
Or hast thou an arm like God's?
(38.5,12,17,31; 39.26-27; 40.9.)

Job's friends, who were so naively certain that the ways of God with the world and man were perfectly explicable by the human principle of retributive justice, did not, I dare say, grasp this profoundest of truths even after they were rebuked by God for not having "spoken truthfully to Me as hath My servant Job." And it was not until almost at the end of his incisive spiritual experiences (cf. ch. 28), that Job himself attained to the full realization of this truth—and its hope-laden religious challenge. God's discourse, then, if admonishingly directed to Job himself, as the Hebrew text has it, certainly could not but have proved helpful to him, in his own more effective realization of this truth.

Be that as it may, we now find Job enabled, by his ever-deepening gropings toward a more soul-steadying approach to the ultimate mystery which is the cosmic scene, tellingly to make his own that wisdom which was finally confirmed for him by God's own dramatic, "amidst the storm," message:—

> But where is wisdom to be found?
> And where is the home of knowledge?
> Man doth not know the way to it,
> It is not found in the land of mortals.
> God understandeth the way to it,
> He knoweth its home;
> For He seeth the ends of the earth,
> He beholdeth the vastness of the heavens.
> (28.12-13, 23-24.)

"He Seeth The Ends Of The Earth," And Its Hope-laden Religious Challenge

But Job's full realization of this great truth, of the infinite Wisdom of God and of man's utter inability, owing to the finiteness of his reason, to grasp the ultimate principle by which the Infinite God functions in His universe, that realization inexorably directed his mind to the further religiously fruitful recognition of man's inability to pass final judgment on the ultimate wisdom and rightness of Creation. With this new humility-inspiring wisdom, Job's prophetic soul was now fully prepared to

reach out for the inevitable Prophetic Conclusion which led to his reconciliation with his God—and his fate.

We may now, in our own way, follow this "reaching out" on the part of Job. This God of his, whose existence *and* moral nature, Job, thanks to the inspired integrity of his life, never really doubted, though for a long moment, he felt estranged from Him as a result of his cruel and, above all, baffling sufferings, which very sufferings, however, inspired Job to refind Him in the depths of his own moral personality; this God Whom Job's profoundly prophetic soul could envision as appearing on the human scene to vindicate Job's human dignity, to graciously recognize him as "My servant Job," and to declare that "I respect him" for the very reason of his righteousness and truthfulness; this God, Who thus claimed spiritual affinity with him—the miserably stricken mortal—, is not He—so reared itself that inevitable Prophetic Conclusion in Job's mind—deserving of the profoundly wise and humanly-becoming *confidence* on the part of Man? If this All-Puissant God is the *moral* God, as Job's own inmost moral consciousness vouches that He is, notwithstanding the oft-discouraging facts of Nature and History and the individual's own personal experiences,—does it not behoove man, considering the utter finiteness of his comprehension of the Infinite Cosmic Drama, challengingly

to call upon the morally nurtured faith-resources—fortunately ever present in the depths of his soul—to inspire him with his desperately needed confidence in the Ultimate Beneficence of the Universe? And ought not this religiously sublime confidence, in turn, inspire Job-Man wisely to put into practice the psalmist's liberating counsel:— "Roll thy burden upon the Lord, thy God!" (Ps. 37.5.)

Job's Prophetic Conclusion— And Reconciliation

And this, indeed, was Job's Prophetic Conclusion. When Job had finally re-discovered his moral God through his re-discovery of the moral law in the depths of his own moral consciousness, in the "still small voice" within his prophetic soul, and had, furthermore, fully and effectively realized the finiteness of man's knowledge in the light of the infinite Wisdom of that Moral God, he finally found himself fully reconciled to his God—and to his fate—and was again prepared for worship of Him. After God's dramatic "amidst the storm" appearance, Job fittingly exclaims:—

I know that Thou canst do all things,
That nothing is impossible with Thee!
I had heard of Thee by report,
But now mine eye hath beheld Thee.
Therefore, though I am wasting away,

I am comforted for my lot of dust and ashes!
(42.2, 5-6.)

—And Without Benefit Of The Happy Ending

It is important to note, my dear Aristotle, that Job was "comforted" despite his tragedy—despite the fact that he was still "wasting away" and that his material and physical lot still remained "dust and ashes." The last two lines of that passage convincingly show—as many of the modern critical Biblical students have correctly seen—that the Happy Ending, found in our present text of the Book of Job, was not originally part of the book. The original ending of the book said nothing of Job's wealth having been in the end restored to him "twice as much as he had before," as the appended Happy Ending would have it. Nor did our author have God perform a miracle in order to cure Job of his incurable disease. For one thing, our author, as I intimated earlier, was perceptively aware—and way ahead of his time—of the operation of natural law. With such awareness, he would have considered it irrational to expect God to upset—even for the benefit of "My servant Job"—the laws of Nature which, in the conception of our author, God had laid down for its operation at the beginning of Creation, even as He did the Moral

Law for the guidance of man (28.25-28). Again, the performance of such a miracle would have negated not only the entire problem of our author's book, namely, the mystery of the suffering of the righteous, but also his inspiring thesis of the disinterestedness of man's piety, or the performance of goodness on the part of the prophetic soul for its own sake—without expectation of reward.

Our interpolator of the Happy Ending, apparently, was either not acute enough to grasp the profound message of our author, or he simply did not approve of our author's unorthodox solution of the Jobian Problem, especially its implied denial of the principle of retributive justice.

The original ending of our book, as was to be expected from this penetrating thinker, was more realistic, and, for that very reason, more inspiring to all prophetic souls. Following up our aforementioned command of God to Job's friends to properly atone for their unjust accusations of Job, as well as for their sophistical defense of God, the original ending of this great book simply and nobly reads as follows:

> And Eliphaz, the Temanite, and Bildad, the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Naamathite, did as God commanded them, and God respecting Job, forgave them. Thereupon, all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all his former

> friends came to Job, and ate bread with him in his house, and condoled with him and comforted him for all the affliction that God had brought upon him; and they gave him each a piece of money and a golden earring.
>
> (42.7-9,11.)

In the Prologue, as you will recall, Job's friends denied him their sympathy when, upon approaching him, they discovered that he was smitten with the incurable disease of black leprosy, which definitely indicated to their traditional minds Job's great guilt. Following God's vindication of Job, however, Job's friends were ready to make amends for the wrong which they committed against their noble friend. Until now, they, as well as all of Job's relatives and former friends, have abhorred him, and held aloof from him, and even forgotten him (19.13f.,19), in conformity with the still prevailing custom in the Orient which forbids even the nearest relatives to visit the leper on his ash-heap. Now, however, as a sign of their reconciliation, they condole with him and comfort him, and, again, in accordance with traditional practice, they hold a peace-feast in his house and present him with gifts.

Why Job Was "Comforted"—

We note, then, that Job was "comforted" in the

face of the persistence of his tragedy. His re-discovered God, who took the trouble to appear on the scene, did not reverse that tragedy, nor did He reveal the reason for Job's admittedly undeserved suffering. Even now, as during Job's earlier rebellious broodings, his God still "giveth no accounting!" But the prophetic soul that was Job was nevertheless "comforted!" Why? Evidently, for the at once simple but, to Job, transcendently significant reason that this very ineffable God, though still giving "no accounting" to man for His actions, nevertheless took the trouble to vindicate a mere mortal's integrity and dignity! Why was this so important to Job? Obviously, for the reason that by such recognition of "My Servant Job," God graciously revealed His spiritual kinship with Job-Man. For the great reason, in brief, that despite the utter mystery of His ultimate ways to the finite reason of man, God reveals Himself sufficiently to the truly prophetic soul as Moral Personality! As a Moral Being, that is, Who is intensely concerned with moral values, Who thus eloquently evinces His Divine respect for the Jobs of mankind who live in sacrificial loyalty to the promptings of that "still small voice" within them, which, according to our prophetic insights, is the Voice of that Power not-ourselves that makes for Righteousness. For the Jobs of the world, this is "comfort," indeed! With such a God, Job was

finally prepared to be reconciled in the very face of the enigma of his innocent suffering. In such a God, Job was ready to repose his destiny, in the sure confidence of His Ultimate Beneficence. Fortified with this Prophetic conviction, Job was finally prepared to follow the Psalmist's counsel:—

Roll thy burden upon the Lord, thy God!—, in the abiding faith that his individual destiny was in some morally significant, however humanly inexplicable, way, bound up in the Divine Cosmic Scheme of Things.

It is evident, I may observe here, from the foregoing exposition of our author's religious solution of the Problem of Suffering, that the aforementioned modern philosopher's allegation, that Job yielded in the end by surrendering right to Might, is woefully far off the mark. This author's statement does not even talk, as it were, Job's language! If the word "yield" can at all be applied to Job's final reconciliation with his God, it is a yielding, not to sheer Omnipotence, but to a Divine Power that is infused with Moral Purpose—to a *Beneficent* Power—to a Moral Personality. Not until Job was enabled to envision his God as such, was he prepared to worship Him. To this Beneficent Personality Job in the end yields, not by surrendering his right, but by willingly, nay exultantly, reposing in Him his ultimate destiny, in the prophetic

confidence, impliedly, that his righteous life—*and* his sufferings—have some moral meaning and value in the ultimate Divine Scheme of Things.

The Spiritual Rewards That Are The By-Products Of The Moral Life

Before summarizing, my dear Aristotle, the philosophic import of the Book of Job, may I add that it goes without saying that while its author has so emphatically contended for the disinterestedness of human virtue and denied the dogma of material retribution for righteous conduct, he at the same time emphatically pointed to the spiritual rewards that necessarily follow from a sacrificial moral life. Among these, need I specify, is the soul-redeeming sense of human dignity, which, as we have seen in the instance of Job, serves the prophetically-living individual as a mighty comfort, a soul-steadying tower of strength against the worst of personal tragedies. Again, especially for the deeply religious soul, there is, as in the case of Job, the beatific sense of Divine Fellowship, than which there is nothing more precious to the godly individual. And is not such divine fellowship, as well as the sense of human dignity, denied to the man of evil?—

What fellowship hath he with God on high,
What communion with the Almighty in the heavens above?

(Job 31.2.)

In further connection with the problem of reward, may I recall what I mentioned earlier, that our author did not, for the reason which I noted, include spiritual immortality in his religious solution of the problem of suffering. As we look back upon it, we cannot help but deem this omission fortunate for the religiously inspiring treatment that he has given to this problem as well as for his perceptive thesis of non-other-worldly spiritual reward. If he had taken account of the idea of immortality in this connection, his own solution of the problem would not have been as permanently satisfying—certainly not to those religionists, who, for one philosophic reason or another, cannot accept the idea of personal immortality as an article of their religious faith. Our author might also, in that event, have been tempted to embroil the religious way of life with that socially-negative other-worldliness, which, as you know, became its chief characteristic at a later date in the non-Jewish world, as it already was in his own day, and even before, in certain parts of the Eastern world. An other-worldly development, I need hardly repeat, upon which we prophets, whose central religious in-

terest is the religiously inspired social-moral regeneration of man in this world, could not but look with disfavor.

Spiritual Immortality And The Moral Life Independent Of The Problem Of Reward

The idea of personal spiritual immortality, as I suggested earlier, has properly become an integral part of theistic religion, being a logical development of our prophetic doctrine of the transcendent reality and worth of human personality. This sublime idea can therefore stand on its own legs, as it were, and need not become merely an argument for the solution of the problem of human suffering on earth, or a mere bait for the practice of the moral life. So can and does the moral life itself rely on its own merits. It has its own inescapable compulsions and absolute worth. The moral life is, in other words, independent of the idea of reward, whether in this or in another life. The moral life must be practised *le-shemah*—for its own sake. This, notwithstanding the paradoxical fact that when it is so practised, it inevitably brings its own spiritually precious results—and in the *here* and *now!* Indeed, those who believe in personal spiritual immortality, as well as in the transcendent worth of human personality, can even philosophically contend that an ever-deepening

moral life helps to *create* such immortality, and that this, too, is one of the varied spiritual rewards of the sacrificial moral life. But here, again, in our view, the latter possibility must be regarded as one of the rich spiritual *by-products* of the moral life, rather than as a mere justification for it. The inevitable melancholy result of regarding the moral life as a mere *means* to this *end,* is, as we know, the narrowing of religion into an utterly other-worldly concern—a mere self-centered means for the salvation of one's precious little soul in another world. The true religious life should be—as it is in our Prophetic religious philosophy—a divine consecration of one's life for the moral regeneration of oneself and of mankind through the spiritually rich possibilities of the social life of mankind in this world.

The Rich Mysticism Of The Moral Life

In philosophic terms, we may now briefly summarize the great Prophetic message of the immortal Book of Job as follows:

The moral life at its sacrificial deepest and noblest has the capacity—as eloquently attested to by the countless noble souls who have lived it—to generate its own rich and deep mysticism. That mysticism is at the basis of the Prophetic or theistic conception of God, and is its supreme philo-

sophic justification. By the aid of its mystic insights, the Prophetic soul is enabled to achieve—what our intellect must forever remain a stranger to—the vision of God as Moral Personality. By its aid, the prophetic soul transmutes its inherited faith into a challenging conviction, and in its supreme mystic moments, into an actual *vision* or mystic *awareness* of God as Moral Personality. The moral life at its deepest and noblest, in brief, creates the Golden Thread that unites the human with the Divine, and affords man the supreme intimations of the reality of the Divine in human nature and in the universe.[29] Man's moral personality, at its noblest and deepest, mystically reaches out to, and finds, and communes with, Personality. And in this mystic communion, the prophetic soul finds the "peace that passeth understanding," which resolves both the disillusionments of life and the inevitable and eternal antinomies, or contradictions, of our intellect.

The Religious Solution

Thus, my dear Aristotle, while Job's Problem of the Suffering of the Righteous obviously remains unsolved *rationally,* that is, by the formulae of cold, "impersonal" logic, it is, to our mind, eminently solved religiously. It is solved by the logic of that other way of philosophy as mystical insight,

by the aid of those mystic insights, of which I have spoken, that were for our prophets and sages generated and nourished by the deep and rich mysticism of the sacrificial moral life. Though this solution may not be convincing to those "men of the world" who have chosen to be strangers to the Prophetic Way of Life, it goes without saying that to the prophetic soul this solution is more convincing than the most conclusive proofs derived from all the most rigid formulae of logic.

"The Fool Saith In His Heart—"

It is this very logic, incidentally, that our Biblical sage, voicing our *ḥokmah—our* way of philosophy, or Moral Wisdom—applied, when he declared:—

> The fool saith in his heart: "There is no God." (Ps. 14.1; 53.2.)

From the viewpoint of rational philosophy, the wisdom of this declaration may be questioned. To that other "way" of philosophy as *ḥokmah,* or morally-inspired mystic insight, however, it is axiomatic, and can be questioned only by him who is a stranger to the mystic insights of the prophetic moral life. And if we translate the Hebrew word *nabal* (fool) in the psalmist's verse, just quoted, by its other Biblical meaning—the wicked—our psalmist's declaration expresses even more completely the underlying principle of *our* philosophy. Lest

you condemn poor Jeremiah as a fanatic in this connection, may I remind you that I have already granted that there are thoroughly righteous non-theistic souls. What these good souls lacked, however, according to our prophetic lights—which, to us, explains their anti-theism—was a redeeming bit of the prophetic soul's mystic insight.

Its Pragmatic Challenge

I cannot refrain from adding that if that modern "way" of philosophy, which goes under the name of *Pragmatism,* is a legitimate phase of rational philosophy, I dare say that the prophetically religious solution may also find an honored berth therein. For this solution "proves" its worth by its rich "practical" results, to wit, the confidence, the courage, and the *serenity* that it gives to them who prophetically choose to accept it as the answer to that otherwise pessimism-festering problem that is always with us.

An Effective Antidote For The New Pessimisms

As I observe, with great melancholy, eminent sir, the new ghosts of pessimism that have reared their ugly heads in modern times as a result of rash and dogmatic atheistic inferences from the new revelations of Science, I cannot help but come

to the conclusion that an effective antidote for those new pessimisms that either rant in Schopenhauerian bombast or chirp in the more sedate but nonetheless depressing tones of later philosophical writers, is a more sober and sympathetic second look, on the part of some of our moderns, at the philosophic validity of that mighty Jobian Prophetic faith of ours. It is my sober conviction that only a daring mystical flight, on the part of the spirit of modern man, out of the meshes of its shackling, rational and scientific formulae to the free, soul-liberating air of our Jobian faith, can lay the pessimistic ghosts that have been consuming the vitals of the soul of so many moderns.

The Prophetic Way To God—Twice Blessed

And it is my sober conviction, too, that the new-old way to that faith is the Prophetic one—a new baptism in moral living—a new consecration, on the part of the individual, to the battle for that prophetic justice that has not yet existed on earth. That new moral baptism, that new moral consecration, can, indeed, open the mind of modern man, even as it has opened our prophetic minds in the distant past, to that mystic moral faith in the functioning of a Moral Purpose at the heart of things which inspires confidence and purpose in living.

That Prophetic Way, which we have revealed to man is truly twice blessed. Blessed, in that, by inspiring man to wholeheartedly practise justice and mercy to all humankind, it enables man to convert his little planet into a fitter habitation for his survival and spiritual progress. Blessed, again, for the reason that such sacrificial devotion to and absorption in the moral life may, in turn, enable the modern, even as it enabled us, to achieve that mystic insight by which one can envision man's moral drama on earth as a mystic witness to the reality of the Moral Purpose that functions at the heart of the entire universe. In thus walking the Prophetic Way of Justice and Mercy, eminent sir, Man—at least the more spiritually perceptive of his kind—can find himself, in time, also walking humbly with his God . . . .

With this quiet but firm affirmation, the prophet Jeremiah came to the end of his exposition of the religious-moral substance and philosophic justification of Prophetic faith.

Aristotle's Concluding Comments

We now can imagine, my dear Harold, the philosopher Aristotle taking his respectful leave of the prophet with the following meaningful words:

Reverend sir, your exalted exposition, for which

I am deeply grateful, of the profound meaning and philosophic basis of the great faith of your Prophetic fraternity, with its dramatic sequel of the spiritual odyssey of your people's immortal Book of Job, was not only replete with such sublime morally inspired religious fervor as we Hellenes could never command, but was also weighted with such philosophic insight as challenges reason itself.

The Rich Religious Possibilities Of That Prophetic Way

As I look back upon your inspiring Argument, what stands out in my mind is what you have felicitously called the Prophetic Way to God, the way of the sacrificial moral life that may lead to your Prophetic vision of God as Moral Personality. The rich mystic possibilities of this morally and religiously inspiring idea, as seen especially through your own moral depths, is something we pro-religious Greek philosophers, and, I dare say, philosophers of all ages, have either overlooked, or failed to fully explore.

Recalling the deep moral content and the moral dynamism of your Prophetic faith, the following reflections come to my mind as I am about to regretfully take leave of your venerable presence.

The Philosopher's Great Regret—

Would, my dear Jeremiah, that mankind, at the advent of Greek civilization, had been equipped with the intellectual perception to wed the noble, dynamic fervor and sanity of your Prophetic moral philosophy, so significantly tied, as it is, to the noble vision of your God, to the intellectual and artistic contribution of our Hellenic civilization! How much farther, indeed, would mankind have travelled on the road of social and spiritual achievement!

That Unconsummated Union
Of Hebraism And Hellenism!

Unfortunately, neither we, ancient Greeks, nor, certainly, the rest of mankind, were at once intellectually and morally prepared for this, so indispensable, Prophetic-Hellenic Synthesis. Your lofty Prophetic religion, as we now know, came to the Hellenistic-Roman world long after our own classical period. It, furthermore, reached an already intellectually decadent world, neither cloaked in your noble, Prophetic moral purity, nor imbued with that dynamic social-moral mysticism you spoke of. It reached that world, alas, in that unrecognizable form that reeked with other-worldly mysticism and gross superstitions. It was weighted with an

other-worldly asceticism that assumed the shape of a sort of Half-Way House to World- and Life-Weary Buddhism. Thus, for a millenium and more, the Western world was deflected from the promising task of rearing a social order upon the joint firm foundations of your morally dynamic Prophetic insights and the intellectual and artistic ideals of our own civilization. The effective realization of this, the only promising Syncretism—this harnessing of your Prophetic religio-moral vision to the intellectual power and light of Greek culture at its highest —this full-orbed realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth, as you Prophets so inspiringly call it—is still, I sadly note, mankind's unfinished business!

Mankind's Unfinished Business, And Another "Lamentations"?

With you, indeed, reverend sir, I, as a serious philosopher, note with great melancholy how woefully modern man, dangerously poised on the precipice of Atomic Suicide, stands in need of harnessing his hard-won scientific achievements to the potent moral idealism of your Prophets. How dangerously one-sided, in fact, is modern man's scientific achievement! How lamentably has he permitted his scientific progress to outrun his social-moral progress,—with the sorry result that his very scientific achievements may be his undoing!

Will it, then, be the sad lot of another prophet to compose another *Lamentations*—this time, of course, over the ruins of a World-Zion?

Israel And The God-Idea

And may I, reverend sir, conclude our most stimulating exchange of thoughts with this pertinent reflection?

In our present existence, I came across the thought-suggestive legend of your Bible, concerning your Patriarch Jacob's intriguing and stirring battle, which lasted throughout the night, and until the break of dawn, with a godly being, or, perhaps, with God Himself! As a result of his hazardous, but quite successful, battle, I learn, the name of that doughty Patriarch was changed from Jacob to *Israel.*

In this magic name, I understand, your Biblical writer ingeniously discovered the inspiring homily that Jacob "fought with God and man, and prevailed!"

If, I, as but a poor layman in these matters, may be permitted to hazard a little homily of my own on this very intriguing legend of your Biblical author, might I not say that your people, through its Prophets and Sages, fought, not with God, but with the God-Idea, nobly and effectively. The philosophic issues of the God-Idea are, as you are

aware, still being fought over by the moderns, and will no doubt continue to be furiously argued over to the end of time. And for the reason, no doubt, so effectively highlighted by you, of the eternally intellectually-unsolvable nature of this mighty problem. However, the weighty contribution to this profoundest of all mysteries, made by Israel's great Prophets and Sages, which you have so enlighteningly revealed and so persuasively defended, merits in the light of my present, "on second-thought," Elysian insights, the respectful philosophic re-consideration even of that super-sceptical race of the "moderns."

Aristotle Bids Jeremiah Adieu

And so, Philosopher and Prophet bade each other warm adieus, accompanied by their sincere expressions of mutual desire to meet again for further philosophical camaraderie in these pleasant Elysian Fields . . .

CHAPTER FIVE

AN INTERLUDE— NEWS FROM UNCLE SAM, AND SOME BOUQUETS

A few weeks had elapsed after the conclusion of our Elysian exposition of the substance and philosophic basis of Prophetic faith, which Harold followed with intense attention during the several sessions of its telling before he felt prepared to give his fully digested reaction, as he put it. There was so much to it, he said when it ended, that he must have more time to mull it over!

And come to think of it, he added, this is especially true of the previously mentioned invisible but irrepressible "sceptic" within me. For, Harold continued with a knowing smile, the surprising offensive-defensive nature of that, as he called it, "Elysian Operation" has left my "sceptic" baffled and embarrassingly aware that much of his thunder had been stolen from under his very nose, as it were!

In the interest, then, of a more fruitful discussion, Harold thought that his "sceptic," in particular, should be allowed the necessary breathing spell to harness the remainder of his thunder. Although the latter may not turn out to be more puissant than that already heard in the Elysian Fields, it is most important—so his "sceptic" now continued categorically to assure him—that Harold wait for the hearing of it, after that breathing spell, before he is caught in the theistic trap! This, he must do, in fact, for no less a reason than the good of his modern temper!

The suggested interlude was mutually agreed upon.

In the meantime, the expected news from his good Uncle reached Harold to report at an early date to pick up his Duffle Bag . . .

When we resumed our discussion several weeks later, Harold spoke up as follows:

I believe that I have given our by-now familiar "sceptic" sufficient time to proceed with his nefarious business. Besides, time is running out, and we had better repair to the rest of our task.

Before giving the floor, however, to my vexing alter ego, I deem it but proper to let him stew in his juice for a while in order to give you my very favorable impressions of that inspiring exposition of the Prophetic Moral Argument, heard in the ingenious Elysian setting.

I had no idea, Dad, that the case for Theism, or what you aptly called the Prophetic God-conception, could ever emerge so triumphantly, particularly to a benighted modern who may, for one reason or another, not be entirely convinced! Your novel approach definitely succeeds, to say the least, in inspiring all but the congenital sceptic to be more open-minded on this currently most disparaged subject.

That Meeting Of Minds

I must, then, in all justice, Dad, briefly mention the several things that have definitely appealed to me in that inspiring Elysian exposition of yours.

There is, to start with, that meeting of minds of ancient prophet and twentieth-century enlightened religionist on the subject of Israel's greatest contribution to Western civilization. This proved to me superbly *morale*-lifting!

Aristotle Seeking Torah!

I, further, found decidedly intriguing and thought-provoking your daring idea of Aristotle's readiness—even in his Elysian existence—to seek *Torah* or *Ḥokmah!* And, even more so, the genial, "on-second-thought," disposition of that classic Hellenic exponent of Reason toward a philosophic

re-consideration of the mystic thesis at the basis of the Prophetic or Theistic God-conception.

That Escape-Me-Not Mystic Element

I was further impressed by the fact that in that elevating exposition of your religious position, through the mouth of your Elysian Jeremiah, you showed the philosophic courage, to say nothing of philosophic honesty, in emphasizing that generally overlooked essentially mystic basis of religious faith in general and of theistic faith in particular. You have thus refreshingly, at least to myself, refrained from the superficialism of philosophizing theologians, past and present, of attempting to rationally "prove" their religious faith. You, for one, are evidently not afraid to concede—you are, in fact, pleased to concede, nay, to insist—that religious faith, at its deepest and noblest, is a matter of personal, mystic experience. As such, then, it stems primarily from the mystic depths of the moral personality of the individual, rather than from his intellect, or from his mere intellectualizing on the subject.

Your religious argument, as I see it, wisely appeals to man's ancient moral wisdom—to that *ḥokmah*—the Moral Wisdom of the Hebrew Prophets and Sages—which, you contend, is deeper and sounder than any merely rationally-arrived-at phil-

osophy, seeing that that wisdom emerges from the depths of man's basically mystical personality. Therein, I must concede, I, too, find that peculiar impregnability of your Prophetic Moral Argument, so well pointed out by your Elysian Aristotle. This, together with the indisputable pragmatic appeal of Theism, eloquently commented on by you, should have a potent appeal even in these super-sceptical days, especially to those distraught moderns who, as you would say, are wise enough to lay their minds open to its message of Hope.

Its Message To The Distraught Modern

To this distraught, Reason-bound, Science-worshipping modern, who has put his complete trust in the power of Science to solve even this ultimate problem of life's worthwhileness—only to find it wanting, you, in effect, soberly say: What in the name of wisdom has he to *lose* by giving that mystical religious light a chance to help him? What stands he to lose by laying himself open to the vital ministrations of that faith, which, despite its great antiquity, is apparently still potent enough to infuse into the souls of its devotees a sense of eternal youth? Perhaps, by following this moral wisdom, he, too—this over-intellectualized, fundamentally disillusioned modern-tempered modern—may, despite his multifarious scientific gadgets, perceive and ap-

ply to himself something of the great wisdom of the psalmist's counsel:—

Roll thy burden upon the Lord, thy God!

Wise people, I hear you say, have followed this counsel before, and theirs was the idyllic serenity of yet another psalmist:—

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want!

There is—I further hear you persuasively reason—no law—natural *or* philosophic—against sampling this psalmist's "cup of joy" even in these scientifically-befuddled days! A little quaff of that psalmist's cup, old chap, may yet help that tired "Modern Temper"!

CHAPTER SIX

BUT MY ADVERSARY'S "OPERATION *BUT*—" IS NOT FAR BEHIND....

Had you not warned me, Harold, I remarked, that, what I might call in current military terms, your (or your inner sceptic's) "Operation *But*—" is not far behind, I would instantly strike up my *hallelujahs*!

But—, Harold obliged. Yes, that "But" that is always inseparable from any religious position, no matter how solidly buttressed. Inseparable, that is, not in the minds of the already "converted" but in the minds of those, like myself, who, though rejecting dogmatic scepticism, nevertheless find that sublime Prophetic faith extremely difficult to hold on to, much as they might like to. Yes, difficult for so many facts and reasons that inescapably obtrude themselves upon their reflective minds in their everyday individual and social life.

Let us now give that impatient "inner sceptic" of mine the floor, Harold continued, by psychoanalyzing a member of this numerous fraternity of moderns, whom good old Tradition would challengingly call "men of little faith," as regards that Prophetic faith which you so grandly lifted to that "impregnable" height. For instance, my young, humble self.

(*A*) *The Dark Side Of Religion*

There is, to start with, that "dark side" of religion, to which you referred but sketchily, concerning which not only my "inner sceptic," but this undogmatic young man as a whole is often disturbed. To the extent, alas, of losing faith in all religion. I refer, of course, to the rank superstitions and intolerance that have ever been inseparable from religion throughout the ages, as even now. I have in mind its bloody religious wars, its inquisitions, its historic wars against science and enlightenment, its obscurantism, bigotry and hate, its traditional social conservatism, and its age-old obsession with other-worldliness.

I am ready to agree that the celebrated philosophic lecturer on *The Dark Side of Religion* was quite a bigot on the subject of religion, and that he therefore concentrated his jaundiced vision wholly on Religion's "dark" side. I am also not

unaware that there have been many thoughtful people, and not only during the "ages of faith" but even today, who chose to view the religious panorama through spectacles not so "dark," and succeeded in seeing the brighter sides of that "Eternal Enigma," which is Religion. *But,* you must admit, there *is* undoubtedly that "dark side" to it that is disturbing to the present-day intelligent would-be believer.

Let me briefly psychoanalyze the latter on this specific subject.

How hopefully, indeed, the latter is, at times, disposed to turn his gaze on the brighter side of religion, say, on the grand, non-other-worldly religion of a Jeremiah and of his prophetic compeers and their spiritual heirs of all nations! How often he is prepared to recognize Prophetic Religion's significant and inspiring sanctions touching society's tremendous job of establishing justice in its midst! How, furthermore, he is truly tempted, on occasion, to concede, not merely the hope-laden meaning for man of Prophetic faith, but also its philosophic cogency.

Yet, despite all this pro-religious readiness on the part of this, undogmatic, sympathetic critic, he cannot fail to ask himself these decidedly faith-shattering questions:

But, what has become of that grand Prophetic Religion, when, as in the long past so even today,

it has been "taken over" as its vested interest by the organized Church, which, through its organized clerical machine, has been sanctifying all the evils of that "dark" side of religion? Has not that noble Prophetic Religion—which, as far as I know, organized religion has never made its own in fact, even in the periods of its initiatory zeal—has not that grand Prophetic faith become, in its official investiture, a very disparaging affair in the eyes of the liberal-minded man of yesterday and today? Has not that grand religion, as this sympathetic critic sees it, been constantly lost in bad company, in which he finds it difficult to feel intellectually, and, sometimes, alas, even morally, quite at home?

I Begin My Counter-Offensive

I noticed that Harold was inclined to rest for a while after the first lap of his quite effective "Operation *But*—." He was disposed, I sensed, to welcome my counter-offensive to his Operation's first assault.

Religion, Essentially A Personal Affair

You will recall, I observed, that I stressed the point on various occasions that religious faith is essentially a personal affair—a personal attitude

regarding his relationship to his universe that the individual must decide to adopt for himself. If so, what is there in the "dark side of religion" thesis, no matter how factually correct, to prevent you from choosing for your own good self that grand faith, as you described it, of the Great Prophets of Israel?

The Prophets themselves, as you know, were equally hot-and-bothered by the "dark" side of the religion of their own day. Yet that did not prevent them from creating, and, above all, from heroically and exultingly living that highly moralized and enlightened interpretation of religion, which, I note, you, too, are inclined to consider beneficial for man. If you are inclined to feel that laying your mind open to that Prophetic faith will benefit you personally, in that it will give greater spiritual substance and assurance to your personal life, why, then, in the name of good wisdom, should the "dark" side of religion in general prevent *you,* any more than it did the Prophets, from embracing that brighter, Prophetic side of religion and availing yourself of its precious spiritual possibilities?

The Challenge Of "Every Little Bit Counts"

Furthermore, if you are possessed of a spark of that social conscience that inspired the Prophets

of Israel to interpret their faith into a religion of dynamic social justice, and to thereby greatly brighten the "dark" side of religion, will not, I ask, your own individual, sacrificially uncompromising social expression of your own faith contribute its mite toward the same end? Utopia—that never-fully attainable goal in any phase of human activity—was soberly placed by our Prophets at the Messianic "End of Days." Human nature, being what it is, ideal religion and ideal righteousness—together with all other ideal goods—cannot be realized by man over night. It is a long, gruelling, but highly rewarding, job for the ages! But every little bit counts! The effort of every ideally-minded individual is important in the total ongoing life of mankind.

The Voice of the Great Prophets of Israel, in their own day, was like the traditional "Voice in the Wilderness." Even the twentieth century has not even begun to catch up with that voice. Yet there it is—the unsilenceable voice of the ages, the "moral conscience" of mankind! As such, it immovably stands, to challenge permanently the best of men to a life of greater righteousness and holiness! Its divine thunder has, during the ages, managed to effectively reach the ears of even some of the powerful traffickers in the "dark side" of organized religion! And has not that voice, in fact, made itself heard, on occasion—though alas, on oc-

casion only!—in the life and ministrations of organized religion generally? The sanctions and ministrations of institutionalized religion, you will in all fairness agree, are not all on Religion's "dark side," the prejudiced opinions on the subject of anti-religionists, notwithstanding. To be sure, the voice of the leaders of organized religion all along, and even today, has been slow and halting, touching the fundamental social problems of the day. Yet, no one who is familiar with the current official social-justice pronouncements of the several organized bodies of Church and Synagogue, of our own country today, will deny that the undying, clarion, socially-inspired voice of the Great Prophets of Israel is being increasingly heard, if not in the pulpits, at least in the ministerial conferences and press releases of organized religion.[30]

The "Dark Side" Of Religion Does Not Prove Its Worthlessness

It is, furthermore, important for the sober-minded student to realize that the fact that there is a "dark side" to any vital social organism or institution does not by itself prove its utter worthlessness. In many instances, at least, the very fact that a social institution is there, and is there a long time, and vitally persists in the life of humanity, should in itself serve the perceiving student as a

suspicion, to say the least, that mankind, as a whole, in its age-old good wisdom finds it vital for its survival or well-being.

Harold broke in here to observe that his sharp "inner sceptic" has just nudged him to inform him that he finds this argument specious. Evil, he protests, has also persisted, yet that does not make it vitally necessary.

Apropos of this objection, I suggested to Harold to counsel his bumptious nemesis not to be over-hasty in condemning this argument. Evil, I observed, unlike religion, is not a self-conscious social *institution*—although, unfortunately, it often appears to be such! Evil happens to be an unfortunate social *by-product* of life. My present argument deals not with a mere social *phenomenon* but rather with a social organism or institution.

Intelligently, then, applying the lead of this well-founded suspicion to his investigation of the causes that gave rise, probably at a very early period of man's evolution, to the universal religious phenomenon, and, despite the repeated rationalistic onslaughts directed against its "dark side," are equally responsible for its vital persistence to this day—applying this wisdom, the objective and perceiving student must come to the conclusion that this particular all-pervasive social entity, too, must have had, and must still have, a vital function to perform for man's survival or well-being.

By the same good logic, that student must, furthermore, recognize that it is this survival-value that religion contains which explains why man's deeply ingrained wisdom sternly counsels him not to give it up, nay, stubbornly to hold on to it,—and let the sceptics do their worst!

Religion's Survival-Value For Man, And The Great Refusal

Religion's survival-value for man in the earliest stages of his evolution—so studies of the earliest religions reveal—furnished primitive man with desperately needed confidence in his struggles with the mysterious and hostile forces of Nature. Primitive man's reliance on, and evocation of divine forces, which he believed to reside behind visible Nature, helped to make for his survival. And in the radically different mental climate of today, Religion—and particularly, to my mind, in its Prophetic or theistic expression—still holds for man an equally potent survival-value. What man, today, needs—and therefore seeks—is a Cosmic Moral Companionship in his universe. Indeed, without it, he still finds his universe a lonely, confounding and a disillusioning *habitat,* notwithstanding his better understanding and control of its natural operations.

No better evidence for this thesis can, signifi-

cantly enough, be found than in the aforementioned pathetic despair of those exponents of the "modern temper," who have so hopelessly persuaded themselves of the non-existence of such Cosmic Companionship for the soul of man. Even if we allow, as I do, for the fact of mere human inertia and the many other superficial reasons that are given by religious sceptics for the stubborn persistence of Prophetic faith, it still cannot be doubted that the fundamental explanation for the continuing hold that it has upon modern man is to be found in the fact that it eminently satisfies his continuing vital need for religious assurance that he is not *alone* in his universe. More pliable to his desires, his scientific world may, indeed, be to the modern man than was the old universe to his pre-scientific forbears. Yet that better scientifically-understood universe still remains, for the modern, confoundedly empty and alien without that Moral Companionship, which his religious sense still seeks, and confidently believes to be somehow resident therein. It is, in other words, the Great Refusal on the part of modern man to afflict himself with that paralyzing pessimism of the "modern temper," that essentially explains the fervent and persistent "will-to-believe" of the large majority of mankind—yes, even of the great masses of the church-unaffiliated—in the reality of the God of our Prophets.

Modern Atheism-inspired Pessimism

If one is in need of being further convinced how great is the need of that Prophetically religious assurance today on the part of that ultra-scientific man, who not so long ago entertained such salvation-guaranteeing trust in scientific progress, one need but recall, or acquaint oneself with, the many well-known works of modern and contemporary literature, including the drama, to say nothing of modern philosophy, in particular the pessimism-ridden tomes of those philosophic essayists, previously referred to, all of which, significantly enough, have been penned on the all-out atheistic premise. Atheism-inspired pessimism and disillusionment are there writ large on every soul-paralyzing page!

It is, then, because Prophetic Religion has had and continues to have this unique survival-value for the large majority of mankind, because it treasures a benison that is unique in the sense that no other mental discipline—neither Science, nor Art, nor even Philosophy that is exclusively dependent on reason—can give and assure him,—it is this incisive fact, I say, that essentially and eloquently explains Prophetic Religion's persistently vital hold upon the life and thought of man. Yes, even in our super-sceptical today. For that unique reason, I believe, it will continue to be vital to man

throughout that indefinite tomorrow, and, I dare say, for as long as man remains human.

Why Religion Has A "Dark Side"

Religion, as the perceiving student sees it, is no less than an elemental social force, being, as it is, one of man's principal survival media. As such, it is, probably, more ancient than morality; certainly, more ancient than that phase of it which we describe as individualistic or reflective morality. In its primitive stages, religion may be mainly characterized as amoral. Its moralization came at a later stage of its evolution. Being, then, such an elemental social phenomenon, it is but natural and inevitable that, like other vital social phenomena—such, for instance, as the State—it should have its "dark side." This "dark side" of religion, however, never completely destroyed its survival-value for man. Nay, realizing its fundamental survival-value, man set to work to increasingly eliminate its "dark side" in order to widen its survival-value. This was accomplished, again as in the case of the State, by the sacrificial efforts of heroic souls who were bent on increasingly moralizing it, or subjecting it more and more to the demands of social morality. This, as you know, was the heroic task of the Prophets of Israel in their day, as it has been the task of all prophetic souls of all ages.

Morality, Although The Royal Road To God, Not The Whole Of Religion

It is important to remember, however, that by such moralization of religion, neither its essential message nor the unique survival-value of that message evaporates.

The Prophets of Israel have almost identified the religious life with morality—with the practising of justice and the loving of mercy. I say almost, advisedly, for, as is evident from the prophet Micah's Great Summation of the true religious life, they significantly added to their injunction "to do justly and love mercy," the telling phrase, "and walk humbly with thy God." Beyond morality—beyond the social-moral requirements of man as a member of society—there remains the *individual,* in and by himself. For his soul's staying-power and serenity, the individual, in and by himself, has, in this "strange interlude" between two eternities, far-flung needs that point beyond himself as a social being. These needs, Religion—by dint of its unique virtue of directing the individual to that Prophetic Way whereon he may find himself "walking humbly with thy God"—can alone satisfy.

Thus, from a very important and profound aspect, morality is not the *whole* of religion, though, to be sure, it is its cardinal requirement, and, as I indicated earlier, its royal road to God. It must

never be forgotten, as we have just indicated, that the very prophet, who spoke of religion in those ever-challenging moral terms of Justice and Love, significantly pointed to the final touchstone of the religious life, which the moral life, to be sure, eminently helps to achieve: that *confidence* and its resultant *serenity* that are the individual's by virtue of his walking humbly with his God.

My Antagonist Concedes A Point Or Two—

Your counsel, Dad, Harold resumed, apropos of my taking Prophetic faith "straight," as it were, and thus not needlessly denying myself the opportunity of exploring its rich possibilities for myself as an individual just because there really is a "dark side" to religion in general,—that wise counsel, I must admit, is a persuasive, nay, a challenging one!

I must further admit that your pointing up of religion as a very ancient, elemental, social phenomenon, as a tremendous force in its own right, that has risen to the social surface out of the depths of man's needs and in the interest of his survival, and as persisting essentially by reason of this fact,—this, shall I call it, the anthropologic view of Religion's chief function?—is, I must admit, a most illuminating thought. It is, I must add, a very convincing reason, why, as you have argued, the great majority of mankind instinctively refuses to give it

up, nay, even fights to hold on to it, and particularly to its most hopeful, theistic, form. Indeed, for this eminent reason it continues to do so despite the lack of rational proof for its central thesis, in the face of the ever-disturbing Problem of Evil, and notwithstanding how loudly, and, sometimes, even well, the sceptics may argue! He who sees it in that light, I can well understand, must smile at the sanguine predictions of the anti-religionists, which would have it that Religion's days are numbered. I, for one, have not before come across this most revealing angle.

(*B*) —*But Doubts That Basic Mystic Element*

Thanks, son, for those encouraging words. Needless to say, however, that I am girding myself for the next volley of the still unspent thunder of your "inner sceptic."

Yes, Dad, I must proceed with my next task of what you have so intriguingly called my "Operation *But*—."

I fully agree with you that the philosophic *sine qua non* of religious faith—even of non-theistic faith—is that mystic element which you have properly stressed. *But* my scientific-philosophic training very often casts grave doubts on the reality or tenability of all that. May not this mystic insight you speak of really be no more than a delusion

brought on by an overheated imagination, even though the vouching for this insight may come, not from an ignorant "Holy Roller," but from an alert-minded, deep-thinking Jeremiah? I cannot forget the human—all-too-human—tendency of even profound minds to be "carried away" by our so predominantly emotional psyche.

I have taken due note, of course, of your suggestive thesis that the rational phase of our life, which monopolizes us in our various scientific and philosophic disciplines, is not the whole story of our mental equipment. There is within us, you persuasively insist, a much larger area of conscious and, particularly, sub-conscious life that may have an equally important, even more important, message to give man for his spiritual comfort and serenity. Having taken cognizance of that discerning suggestion, I nevertheless say that the reality of that allegedly super-rational "sense" is for most of us a matter of faith. It is, furthermore, concededly impossible of rational demonstration even by those rare personalities who vouch for its validity. The realization of these facts, I must, alas, frankly admit, frequently casts a dark shadow in my mind over the entire theistic thesis.

Again, I cannot help but recall in this connection that the few well-known glorious periods in mankind's history, which are celebrated for their real progress in civilization, were the very ones

when mankind's collective intelligence definitely shoved other-worldly mysticism aside, and enjoyed full sway. This great fact induces me to suspect that the light of our apparently late comer on the evolutionary scene—our reason—is, if not the only light, at least the only reliable one for the enlightened man to go by in his search for what we call the truth concerning our universe and touching whatever so-called ultimate reality it may have.

Re: The Philosophic Validity Of That Mystic Element In Prophetic Religion

You have well, and briefly, stated, son, the eminently philosophic angle of our problem. This may very likely be the most difficult sector of your "Operation *But*—" for me to counter-attack.

Let us, then, stop for a more detailed look at your philosophic difficulty, namely, the problem of the validity of that mystic element in Prophetic Religion. That mystic element, as you agreed with me earlier, must not be overlooked therein. Many religious rationalists, as you have yourself observed, are very much inclined to do so, for the reason that they are anxious to make that deep-brooding faith of the Prophets "modern," that is, rationally acceptable to themselves and to other equally superficial religious rationalists. Indeed,

that mystic element in Prophetic Religion *cannot* be overlooked.

One Of Its Chief Glories And Strengths

As I pointed out earlier, this mystic element is unmistakably there—as it is, incidentally, in all religions worthy of the name—despite the fact that Prophetic Religion—thank God!—is not a religion of mysticism in the extreme and predominantly world-weary or other-wordly sense of the term. Nay, not only must not, and cannot, that mystic element be overlooked therein, but it *should* not, for the reason that, in my view at least, it is one of prophetic religion's chief glories. It is, moreover, one of its chief strengths, inasmuch as it finds available therein its potent philosophic foundation for its faith.

I fully understand your difficulty here, Harold. You, a child of an all-out rationalistic and scientific age, who have been trained to look upon the light of our dialectic reason as the supreme and *only* light for our guidance in the understanding of, and our coping with, our spiritually bewildering universe, are being asked to consider the possibility of yet another and more potent light that is allegedly capable of affording man an insight into a realm of Being that the theoretic reason cannot plumb. The fact that that other alleged light

goes under the very unmodern and—therefore, for the "modern"—forbidding label of intuition, or, worse yet, mysticism, does not, of course, help matters for you.

Its Inspiration In The Social-Moral Life

Your conditioning being such, it is my guess that the reason that the religion of the Prophets has its appeal to you, and to other moderns, is that there shines upon it delightfully the light of social-moral reason, and that whatever mystic element is claimed for it is so much under the surface that it may be conveniently overlooked. Needless to say that the glorious this-worldly social reason of the religion of the Prophets is the very thing that eminently appeals to me likewise. But what equally appeals to me is the fact that in Prophetic religion the mystic element is not submerged, but is, on the contrary, a basic component and, as I indicated earlier, is so inextricably tied to, and finds both its inspiration and grand expression in, the social-moral life of man.

A More Sympathetic Approach?

Perhaps, then, if you would approach the essential thesis of mysticism from the angle of Prophetic Religion, you may be more inclined to give the

mystic thesis a more deservedly sympathetic hearing. For in that case, your "modern" reluctance to give it a decent hearing need not be re-enforced by the traditional concomitants of religious mysticism, such as its tendency toward other-wordliness or asceticism, so naturally distasteful to the modern Western mind.

The Mystical Insight Per Se

Suppose, then, we posit from the start the proposition that mysticism *per se* does not necessarily require a *nein-sagen* to life and the world, as we normally know them. Suppose we, furthermore, postulate the proposition that mysticism *per se* need not, and does not, disparage the usefulness of the human reason in our knowledge of, and our coping with, Nature, that it, in other words, fully leaves room for the precious faculty of our discursive intellect in the field of science and rational philosophy. Suppose we posit, further, that Mysticism's vouched for insights apply only to the realm of Life's ultimates that are subsumed under the meaningful term of God (whatever may be the various connotations of that term), seeing that our reason, as is almost universally conceded, is incapable, thanks to its natural limitations, to probe those transcendental realms.

Its Essential Message

Suppose we soberly reflect on the fact that, despite our intellect's admitted inability to furnish us guidance on these Life's ultimates, the human soul, which is admittedly more than our intellect, has throughout the ages felt, and still feels even in these ultra-scientific days, an indefeasible urge to probe these ultimates, in the belief that in the depths of this psyche of ours it can find an *insight* into those ultimates which the human intellect cannot plumb. Suppose, we are further informed—as we have been by the classical intellectual mystics of all ages—that this insight, emerging in some inexplicable way from what we technically call the *intuitive* depths of our personality, is able to, and does, furnish man that valuable something which the human reason cannot furnish him, namely, an *insight* into, an *awareness* of, and *communion* with, the ultimate Reality behind those infinite, rationally-bewildering phenomena which make up our visible world, and that that awareness of and unison with that ultimate Reality afford him—who, by the necessary moral and spiritual discipline, has attained them—an *illumination,* a peace, a feeling of *at-homeness* in the universe, and new *resources of power* that are otherwise unobtainable by the spirit of man.

The Wisdom Of A "Second Look"

Reflecting soberly on these significant items, shall we, I ask, dogmatically let our "modern" prejudices on the subject impel our mind to read this age-old conviction of our mystics out of court, and label it "obscurantism," "stuff and nonsense"? Or shall we rather frankly say to the dogmatic sceptics something as follows: "Gentlemen, it is but fitting that we retain our philosophic virtue! As good philosophers—if we are such—it behooves us to open-mindedly look again and again into the possible philosophic merits of this very ancient proposition. May not such a 'second look' at it open our minds to the realization that our modern, all-out absorption in the mechanics and fruits of our intellect, to say nothing of our proper but inevitably vision-blinding battles against the 'dark side' of religion, has needlessly blinded us to the possible wisdom of a precious insight? May not this recommended second reflection reveal to us the possibility that, despite all our scientific progress—which the thoughtful forever greet with a sigh—this mystic insight may yet have a helpful message even for us of today? Prompted by our new and deeper realization of the gravity of the loss which we have sustained by our hasty surrender of all our traditional 'certainties,' inspired by our new

awareness of the inability of our scientific formulae to furnish us with a staying insight into Life's rationally inexplicable ultimates, may not a sympathetic re-examination of the mystics' thesis help us to recapture at least some of those precious certainties that are at the basis of all religion? Perhaps a new examination of, a new insight into, the mystics' message may yet bring some apparently needed healing to our distraught *modern temper*!"

The Mystical Insight As Seen By A Contemporary Naturalistic Philosopher

What I am, in other words, trying to do, is to make a philosophic appeal to you to keep your mind open to a sympathetic consideration of the thesis, suggested earlier, that the mystic point of view is a plausible and respectable way of philosophy.

And in this connection, I am sure, it would do your philosophic outlook much good to give a very thoughtful reading—if not now, at least, after your war mission is over—of that very enlightening chapter, entitled "Philosophy as Mystical Insight," by Professor Irwin Edman, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. In that chapter, part of his recent book, *Four Ways of Philosophy*, Professor Edman makes a very convincing plea for an

honored place for mysticism among the significant "Ways" of Philosophy. As was mentioned earlier, Professor Edman, as we know, is one of the authoritative exponents of the Naturalistic school of Philososophy, a fact, which as I have already observed, makes his sympathetic treatment of mysticism especially important.

In addition, however, to the fact that this sympathetic treatment of mysticism comes from an entirely unexpected, traditionally "pooh-pooh"-ing source, and that it hails from a modern mind that has fully and appreciatively absorbed the modern scientific point of view, I find Professor Edman's treatment of mysticism important for yet another reason. I refer to the interesting fact that it but expresses, in organized philosophic and convincing terms, what the majority of mankind, in its unorganized and diffident, but, at bottom, perceptive fashion, has always suspected—despite all the loud protestations on the subject of all the "nothing-but"-ers in high places—namely, that there must be great validity in the mystic attitude toward the universe, and, hence, great possibilities therein for the aspiring human spirit.

Its Significant Implications For The General Religious Attitude And For Our Own Religious Position

Professor Edman's sympathetic treatment of mys-

ticism is also important for my own thesis; for it lends philosophic support to that element of mysticism, which is, as I insisted, at the basis of Prophetic faith, and gives it its ultimate philosophic justification. And, to the philosophically perceptive religiously-disposed individual, I may note, a more convincing one than the one based on mere rational "proof." Indeed, once the possible validity of the mystic insight into ultimate Reality is granted, insight that is arrived at not by the ordinary logical or rational processes of our reason or intellect, but through those non- or super-rational, immediate, intuitive, or mystic potencies resident in the depths of man's soul or personality,—if this is granted, then the religiously disposed individual need have no difficulty in finding therein a permanently satisfying philosophic understructure for his faith, such as no rational argument, however well fashioned, can permanently destroy.

There have been, as we know, great differences of opinion between mystical theists, pantheists, and mystically-disposed naturalistic philosophers as to the ultimate nature of the "Object" of the mystic insight. There have been differences of opinion between them as to whether that "Object" is a Moral Personality, or an impersonal "Life," etc. And necessarily so, thanks to the very "personal" quality of that insight. In fact, I expect to argue later that for this very reason, none of them—and

that, of course, goes no less for the usually opinionated naturalistic philosopher—has the philosophic right to dogmatize on this matter and to insist that *his* conception of that "Object," or of that Ultimate Reality, is the only possible one for the mystical insight to envision. Be that as it may for the present, the fact of the matter is that beyond these differences as to the ultimate nature of the mystically envisioned "Object," there is common to all the above-mentioned mystically-disposed thinkers the common religious conviction of a spiritual interpretation of our universe, which is ultimately derived from, and is philosophically justified by, this experienced or posited mystic insight.

If, then, the study on your part of Professor Edman's mentioned chapter will make you more sympathetic to mysticism, I dare say that you may find in the great vistas of the mystic insight a philosophic berth, as it were, for the faith of the Prophets. To be sure, Professor Edman falls short of this goal for the reason that he is wedded to the Naturalistic *faith* of his school. But, as I shall argue later, there is no good reason for others, who are not "sold" on that *faith*—and it is, of course, no more than a faith at its philosophical bottom—to stop short of the Prophets' goal. If anything, the logic of the mystical insight may rather point, as I shall indicate later, to that very goal.

In the interest, then, of my present argument,

and pending your own study of the thesis of Professor Edman's lengthy and philosophically percipient chapter on "Philosophy as Mystical Insight," let me now briefly touch on its leading ideas, and quote a few significant passages.

The Realization Of The Limitations Of Reason As A Promising Approach

As good a preparation as I know for the "modern" toward a more sympathetic approach to the mystical insight, is, of course, the realization of the thesis which I stressed earlier, namely, the limitations of our human reason, and, consequently, the tentativeness of the conclusions of all-out rationalist philosophy, as well as of all our scientific knowledge which is exclusively based on reason. This is the thesis, incidentally, which, as I noted before, is basic to all philosophic mysticism. To be sure, while the said realization by itself does not prove that the mystic insight is valid, or that it can really give us more penetrating knowledge of what we call Reality than does Reason or Science—this realization enables one to give that mystic insight at least an "even break," on the principle sanctioned by our sound human wisdom, that we have nothing to lose, and perhaps something to gain, by giving the so-called mystic insight that proposed "even break"—that unprejudiced open-minded hearing.

Beyond Reason And Science, The Insight Of The Mystics

Now there are any number of passages in Professor Edman's chapter on "Philosophy as Mystical Insight," which most incisively point up our just mentioned thesis. Before quoting a few of them, it is important that I recall to you again that these statements come from a celebrated exponent of the naturalistic school of philosophy who cannot be accused of lack of respect for human reason, nor of a lack of a proper appreciation of the great value of our scientific knowledge. I cite the following:

> The reasonableness of reason itself, remains undemonstrable. When the logician asks us to assent to self-evidence, that is not very different from abdicating the procedure of demonstration itself or pointing, as the mystic does, in silence. (P. 216.)

Let me now quote the last paragraph of this chapter, the first sentence of which may recall to you the mystic element which I pointed up as being at the basis of Aristotle's "Reason":

> The most rationalistic philosophies find themselves culminating in some such blessedness of vision as the mystics try to communicate. The most empirical of thinkers is compelled to begin with data and with assumptions which he

> can neither prove nor refuse to accept. In the beginning of thought and in its culmination, philosophers touch the non-rational immediate; what remained opaque to reflection becomes transparent to intuition. Insight forever outruns discourse, and discourse remains inadequate to what men wish to convey as the reality above all others, which they feel to be somehow there and somehow in them and they in it. Such being the case, philosophy as mystical insight will endure, and will, as its crowning clarity, cap philosophies not given to mystery or vagueness. In it men will find, as Pascal wrote in his *Memorial* of the rapture he had once briefly known and which reason had never given him,
>
> *certitude, peace, joy,*
>
> and there will find a sanctuary to which they may escape from the conflicts of life and society, or a sustaining force by which they may resolve them. (Pp. 222-223.)

It was such a socially resolving force, we may note in passing, that the Prophets of Israel eminently found therein.

"The Poets, The Saints And The Mystics, Possibly Our Best Teachers"

And this last gem on the same subject:

> The substance of things may never be known,

> but the nearest approximation may be the kind of knowledge, the close warm sympathy which *divines* (italics, mine) rather than represents the life of things. The poets, the saints and the mystics are thus possibly our best teachers, and as in Plato, a myth about creation may be a truer account of it than a scientist's dissection of it. For the way of understanding may be through sympathy rather than through reason. A myth may delineate with sublety what escapes a formula, and scientific formulas themselves are simply myths whose rhetoric is soberer and more efficacious than most.
>
> (Pp. 219-220.)

The All-Pervading Mystic Insight

You will further learn from the chapter in question how far-flung is the realm of mysticism. You will learn that it is at the foundation not only of religion, but also, as I indicated previously, of morality, and even—*mirabile dictu*—in the secular province of Art.

The Incisive Presence Of Mysticism In Art

In connection with the indubitable and fruitful presence of mysticism in Art, our author cites a really great passage, which I regret that I find too

lengthy to quote here in full, by a late writer on aspects of Physics, who also happened to be a profound student of the philosophy of music—W. N. Sullivan. In the quoted passage from the latter's work, *Beethoven—His Spiritual Development* (pp. 30-32), that author categorically states what should give our modern worshippers of Science some food for thought. It is the very idea, in fact, which was indicated here earlier, namely, that the only knowledge that Science gives us is of the structure rather than of the substance of things. He goes on to declare, furthermore, that there is no good reason to assume that the knowledge that Science affords us is the *only* knowledge possible to man. In fact, he comes right out and says:

> Science tells us a great deal less about our universe than we have been accustomed to suppose, and there is no reason to suppose that all we can ever know must be couched in terms of its thin and highly arbitrary abstractions.

And he goes on to argue that great art—such as, for example, Beethoven's *Heilgesang* of the A minor quartet—actually gives us perceptions of the nature of reality, or, in other words, *knowledge* of our universe, although Science cannot make room for that knowledge in its scheme of things. Indeed, judging from this author's rich analysis of the

Heilgesang, great art gives us such transcendental knowledge of our universe as enables us to recognize it as a spiritually richer and deeper sort of thing than Science, thanks to its "thin and arbitrary abstraction," can ever define.

A Good Approach Toward Appreciation Of The Validity Of The Religious Mystic's Insight

Perhaps, then, a true understanding of the meaning of great art may pave the way for some "moderns" toward a more sympathetic appreciation of the validity of the insight of the religious mystic. For a great work of art, as Professor Edman percipiently observes,—

> corresponds to something intrinsic in the spirit that beholds it, and seems to be an evidence or manifestation of a realm of order, a region of pure good and pure form of which the material world could not otherwise offer instances, and which its more material constituents, or our psychological response to it, are inadequate to explain or explain away.... In the realm of the arts we seem to experience intimations of a world where values and existence are one. And we experience it in a way that either transcends or short-circuits the processes of intellect. (Pp. 189-190.)

Great Art As A "Secular Form Of The Mystical Experience"

Indeed:—

> The transcendent experiences of beauty are more than instances of immediate apprehension. They are moments of complete absorption, of total rapture. Artistic exaltation is a secular form of the mystical experience. The rapt observer possesses immediately, and is possessed by something ordered, unified, complete, in which he finds intensity and peace . . .
>
> (Pp. 191-192.)

And this—

> is another reason why the philosophical mystic turns to it for confirmation of his feeling that art, more than science and intellect, is the path to reality." (Pp. 192-193.)

Intimations Of The Mystics' Insight Of Pure Being

From this mystical insight, achieved through one's experiences in the realm of art, one may also gain an intimation of how the philosophical mystic arrives at his insight of Pure Being. For that matter, one need not be a philosophic mystic in order to divine, at certain privileged moments, an intimation of the mystic's insight. In fact, most of us experience those rare moments when, as our

author observes, our awareness is sharp, as on a "cloudless day in late summer, in the quiet of a mountain lake, or at a concert at the close of an adagio, when the auditorium is hushed and a clear chord is sounded that might 'reach the ears of God'. . . . But a chord heard, a landscape seen, a person embraced, these might at some comprehensive moment of vision come to seem simply variations on the more absolute theme of Being itself." Our author, of course, concedes that to the ordinary critic such Being might appear to be identified with nothingness. To the more chastened spirit of the mystic, however, "retired from the suasion of the senses, disciplined from the tension of desire," such Being is the "plenitude of all other beings, the virgin soil of possibility." (Pp. 193-194.)

The Mystic Insight, More Emphatically Present In Morality And Religion

This mystical insight, which, upon due reflection, is revealed in the secular realm of art, is even more emphatically evident, as our author indicates, in the fields of morals and religion. He observes that Bergson "reminds us how in the history of humanity, each radically new departure, each life-giving variation from the stereotyped, the petrified and the dead, is the vision of some mystic. The latter breaks through the encrustations of conven-

tional intellectual and social forms and draws a life-enhancing insight from the stream of life itself." (P. 196.) And it was because these prophets of the new insights drew their insights from the stream of life itself that, as was indicated here earlier, they were not obliged to depend upon mere intellectual persuasion for their influence over their people. It was through the mystical contagion, as it were, of those insights, which emanated from the depths of their inspired personalities, that they so effectively touched the depths of the souls of their listeners. These prophets—

> spoke powerfully to men because their words carried the accent of a power and a source deeper and more primary than themselves. They were, as we say, inspired.... Their words carried conviction because they seemed to speak a language that was more persuasive than mere intellectual argument. They addressed others out of the depths of the stream of life, concerning a 'reality' in themselves, and quickened the sense of that life or reality in others. (P. 196.)

"The Road To Moscow"— The Unacknowledged Mysticisms Behind Modern Democratic And Revolutionary Movements

How all-pervasive is the mystical element in all

the facets of human life, can again be seen, as Professor Edman points out, in the mystical foundations of most democratic and revolutionary enthusiasms of modern times. This is significantly true—we may stress—even in the instance of the devotees of democracy or revolution who are not religious, or who are even avowedly anti-religious. The same mystical sense of human brotherhood, a by-product of the mystical love of God, which, in the vision of the mystic, makes all men akin who are drawn to God by the same mystical love, and which has inspired the great mystics of all ages to a passionate and tireless activity to convert all mankind to the truth of their vision—this same mystical faith in the essential humanity and equality of all human beings, is found in the eighteenth and nineteenth century believers in progress and in the twentieth century champions of revolution. The fact that some of the latter may refuse to recognize this truth—and, we may add, its possible ultimate philosophic or religious implications—does not, of course, make it any the less true or significant:—

> 'All men are brothers' has the same mystical note, whether he who believes it thinks they are the children of God, or descendants of apes. . . . It would be hard to estimate, but it would be easy to underestimate, the characteristic sense of immediate apprehension of an

absolute, which animates the devotions—and the fanaticisms—of those who have on some road to Moscow seen the vision of a classless society, and with it heard—like St. Paul—the command to convert all mankind.

(Pp.200-201.)

The Mystic Insight, Not Necessarily Other-Wordly

The foregoing observations, apropos of the unquestionable mysticism behind our democratic and revolutionary enthusiasms, lead to an important conclusion, also stressed by our author, that the mystic potencies in our human nature are not always negative and other-worldly. They may often serve, as I indicated earlier, as a positive force, making for a new moral or economic system. They may prove to be a positive force, even, in religion itself, as witnessed by the dynamic demands for social justice on the part of the Prophets of Israel.

The Ubiquitous Mystical Insight And Its Disparagement By The "Moderns"

At the beginning of the chapter in question, Professor Edman takes full account of the various specious arguments which have created distrust in the minds of many moderns toward the possible validity of mysticism or the "mystical insight," as he felicitously calls it. He does not omit, to be

sure, the alleged similarities between the characteristics of some mystics and those of psychiatric patients. For instance, the dissociation of personality, the sense of unreality in their surroundings, and the escape mechanisms, which are supposed to make the mystic in common with psychiatric patients seek refuge in a world of solitary and ethereal quietude in order to escape the complicated problems of daily life that have become unmanageable for them. As his retort to these "revelations," Professor Edman has this pertinent observation for the student who eschews the practice of running to rash conclusions:

> The towering figures (in the history of mysticism) and the hysterical patients display, to the mind of the inquiring psychologists, some identical symptoms. But, as William James and many psychiatrists have reminded us, the line between the abnormal and the normal is a wavering distinction. Hysterical patients may have hallucinations, and the fixed idea of a religious leader or a poet may equally well be described as such if one chooses. . . . The psychology of insanity and that of sanity are related as a cartoon or a portrait is to a photograph. But distortion may be the work or the gift of genius as well as of insanity.
>
> (Pp. 202-203.)

In other words, remarked Harold, though some

geniuses may have some characteristics of insanity, not every lunatic is a genius.

Reason And The Mystic Insight May Lie Down Together

Well said, son. As for the last mentioned "modern" argument, as well as all other specious arguments, past or present, directed against the possible validity of the mystic insight, it only serves the cautious, unprejudiced student of the subject this useful purpose. Instead of rashly precipitating him into reading the mystical insight out of philosophic court, in the face of the aforementioned evidence of its pervasive presence in the many segments of human life, it rather cautions him against the common tendency of confusing the uniquely distinct functions in human life of the mystic vision and our reason. Both have their rightful and useful place in man's full-orbed life. Our author well sums it up as follows:

> There are sources of power and of joy far more primary than the mind. They truly come from the one universal life of which the mystic speaks. . . . In the very interest of nourishing that power and conserving and maintaining its conditions, intelligence is demanded. Mysticism is the insight of the poet and the saint and the moral genius. He reckons

> hastily who leaves those insights out. They are closer, probably, to the sources of life and of reality than the cautious inferences of prudent men, with all their apparatus of control and calculation. But the sources of life are *only* its sources. It requires empirical observation and responsible intelligence to enable us adequately to use those springs of power toward human joy. (Pp. 215-216.)

The Classic Mystics' Respectful Attitude Toward Reason

It may, in passing, be observed that in accepting the validity of the mystic's viewpoint, one need not accept the too disparaging view, say, of Bergson and of some other moderns, who would have it that we should turn our backs altogether on our intellect for our understanding of reality. In their salutary emphasis on the thesis that in the intuition of the geniuses among the poets and the prophets, rather than in the formulae of the scientist, we must look for the voice of life itself, they have verily gone to the extremes in disparaging reason. The essential natures of reason and intuition, and the exact differences between them, are as yet not sufficiently understood—if they ever will be—to justify the utter disparagement of the one at the expense of the other in their common

task of understanding or divining our infinitely faceted universe. It would seem that on this point the classic philosophical mystics, such as Plotinus, were more philosophically sober. While Plotinus also insisted that the intellect cannot give us the substance of reality, he nevertheless entertained a higher conception of reason, due, very likely, as Professor Edman indicates, to his different conception of reality from that of Bergson and of the other like-minded moderns. Thus while the latter counsel the altogether turning of our backs on the intellect for a knowledge of reality, Plotinus, together with all of the classic religious mystics, rather counsel, as Professor Edman observes, our "going beyond intellect toward union with the eternal One, toward which intellect points and from which it comes." (P. 186.)

Mysticism and "Nature"— The Naturalistic Philosopher's Great Assumption

In taking leave of this highly sympathetic espousal of mysticism on the part of Professor Edman, of which I have noted only the "high lights," but which should, I believe, give you, at least, plenty food for thought on this matter, I must regretfully take issue with him, as suggested earlier, on one important assumption of his on this great subject. As I recall it, that questionable assumption

is not stressed by him in the chapter on mysticism. Very likely, too close there to the incandescent fire of the Burning Bush, for comfort! It does protrude, however, in other parts of his book. I refer, of course, to his assumption that this admittedly mysterious and spiritually awe-inspiring phenomenon can be comfortably fitted into that supposedly all-inclusive "Nature," championed by his philosophic school of Naturalism—that "Nature" (spelled, of course, with a capital "N") to which any "Supernatural" impedimenta is anathema!

It required courage, I am sure, which I, for one, applaud, for an authoritative exponent of Naturalism to utter the above described, powerful "good word" for mysticism. It has been the custom of this school of thought, as I observed earlier, to "pooh-pooh" this subject entirely—out of the Freudian fear, it is my guess, that once the possible validity of mysticism is granted, the field is left wide open for some of its possible, well known, religious implications that are unacceptable to the Naturalistic philosopher. To be sure, in one of the earlier leading exponents of the modern philosophic naturalist school (Santayana, in his *The Realm of Essence*), "mysticism," as Professor Edman notes, "has seldom received so completely an intellectual exposition." But, as Professor Edman also recalls, Santayana nevertheless, in the end, averred, "As for me, I cleave to the

Greeks!" It took courage, then, I repeat, for Professor Edman to depart from the traditional disparaging attitude of his school on this subject. I fear, however, that this commendable courage of his did not serve him so well in his quite understandable assumption that the unique phenomenon of the mystical insight need have none other but "naturalistic" implications.

A Procrustean Bed For Mysticism

It goes without saying that perceptive religionists—theists or otherwise—who have always, soundly enough, it would seem, found in mysticism a potent philosophic support for their fundamental religious position, cannot help but be delighted by Professor Edman's convincing philosophic statement of their own convictions on the matter. Their delight with the same, however, must needs be accompanied by grave doubts touching Professor Edman's belief, that his very own generous description of mysticism can fit into the restricted philosophy of Naturalism, to which he appears to be wedded, as the famous phrase goes, "for life, until death do us part." Despite the heroic stretching, on the part of Professor Edman and of all his contemporary colleagues, of the *faith* (and is it not, I ask again, just another faith?) of Naturalism beyond its earlier simplified—*and* simple—mechan-

istic and materialistic editions, it still appears, on sober reflection, that the more generous bed, which Professor Edman and his "last word" colleagues on the subject have constructed for philosophic Naturalism, is still too procrustean for the rather unwieldy body of Mysticism, as he himself has delineated it, to comfortably lie in.

"Nature" And "Super-Nature" May Lie Down In Peace Together

It is not, of course, difficult to understand the Naturalist philosopher's dread of the term "Supernatural." Outside of his usual anti-religious phobia, there is also the fear, still lurking in his mind from the historic conflict between the Church and Science, that the very use of this term may yet lead us into the intellectual bogs of obscurantism. To "explain" any ultimately, scientifically or rationally inexplicable phenomenon, such as the mystical insight, for instance, as "supernatural"——the naturalistic philosopher fears—must estop—even in these super-scientific days of ours!—our progress toward a scientific or rational explanation of all our yet unexplored natural phenomena which, concededly, may in time be scientifically explained.

Now, as I observed earlier, there is nothing in the philosophy of enlightened theistic religion—

certainly not in these days—which forbids or discourages the scientist to proceed full-speed to an ever-increasing study of Nature and all its scientifically explorable phenomena. But the perceptive naturalistic philosopher of today, himself, admits —though, usually, reluctantly—that there are, unfortunately, many phenomena in "Nature," which, by their very nature, are scientifically or rationally inexplicable, and which, thanks to the natural limitations of our reason, will, very likely, remain so. Such, for instance, as the mysterious phenomenon under present discussion—the mystical insight. And need one recall that there are many, many others? Such as reason itself, and conscience. Add thereto such philosophic items as the ultimate nature of what we call reality, the ultimate mystery of existence itself, the *possible* destiny of this universe of ours, and of man. And all the other ultimate mysteries of our universe that inescapably and eternally strike the deeply philosophical person with ineffable awe.

To be sure, the naturalistic philosopher is within his rights in arguing that because a phenomenon is rationally inexplicable, that fact by itself does not necessarily give it the aura of "supernaturalism." But how does he know? He admittedly cannot prove it. All he can say is that he *believes* —or *prefers* to believe—that it is *ultimately* "natural." My question, then, is:— In what more

philosophically impregnable position is he here than the philosophical theist, who prefers to believe that this or that Reason-defying phenomenon is ultimately "Supernatural"? On purely rational grounds, is not his insistence on the use of the term "ultimately natural," in connection with such probably ultimately inexplicable matters, purely academic, and no less so than the theist's insistence on his use of the term "ultimately Supernatural"? To rationally prove the better sense of their differing preferences, do not both have to resort to pragmatic reasoning? And that on pragmatic grounds, the theist has by far the more convincing position on these matters, must, of course, be admitted, however reluctantly, by the honest naturalistic philosopher himself. For the latter cannot honestly contend that the term "Nature"—even when spelled with capital "N"—can ever evoke that religiously rich and hope-laden meaning for man on these ultimate mysteries of life which the term "Supernatural" inspires. And need I repeat, in passing, that the serious theist does not depend for his ultimate religious position on *merely* rationalist or even pragmatic grounds?

Perhaps, then, if the naturalistic philosopher would only realize that enlightened theism is perfectly satisfied to restrict the use of the term "Supernatural" to rationally inexplicable items of our universe, such as we listed above, he would not

stand in such utter dread of, nor be so disposed to disparage, the term "Supernatural." From the enlightened theist's viewpoint, "Nature" and "Super-Nature" may lie down in peace together. The "supernaturalist" does not, in these days at least, want to decimate the "naturalist," in his serious labors of "unscrewing" whatever is not eternally inscrutable. His only concern is to seek and attempt to find for man, in his own unique, Prophetic way, a more religiously meaningful universe than the naturalistic philosopher can admittedly find *via* his dogmatic insistence on "reducing" every spiritually awing and religiously meaningful phenomenon, such as the mystic insight, to his would-be all-inclusive "Nature."

The One "Reductionist" Thesis Of The New Naturalists

In his stimulating and profoundly humorous monograph, "The Naturalism of Frederick Woodbridge,"[31] Professor Todd Costello of Trinity College has some very pertinent observations on this phase of our subject. Professor Costello observes that he is a "sympatheic critic" of the "new naturalism," expounded in a recent symposium on this subject,[31] for the reason that unlike the nineteenth century naturalism, it does not attempt to explain away the qualitative richness of our experi-

ence. For the reason, in other words, that, unlike the latter, it is not *reductionist* (mind, etc., is "nothing but" atoms and the void, or what have you?). Having thus stated his sympathies, Professor Costello pointedly adds that—

> even the new naturalism has at least one reductionist or liquidationist thesis: There is no 'supernatural.' God and immortality are myths. William James speaks of the feeling of relief which we experience when at last we give up trying to be young and slender. We say, 'Thank God, those illusions are gone.' So the naturalist now looks up the great white throne, where once sat great Jove himself, and exclaims, 'Thank God, that illusion is gone.' But great illusions are not so easy to banish. We must take care lest our suppressed illusions come back to plague us in altered guise, like grinning fiends from out the Freudian deep. (Pp. 295-296.)

No Great Unity Among The New Naturalists

Like the present writer, incidentally, Professor Costello finds no great unity among our new naturalists:—

> I do not find any great unity, otherwise (than in the just mentioned reductionist thesis: There is no 'supernatural'), among these new

naturalists. Professor Dewey and Mr. Santayana are so far apart that no one can have profited by both and still be able fully to accept either. And both of them are more 'idealistic,' in the everyday sense of that word, than many a technically 'idealist' philosopher: Hegel, for instance, whom someone has called 'not merely a realist but a brutalist,' or Schopenhauer, author of that pleasant little sarcasm, 'If you want comfort, go to the priest, I can only tell you the truth.' And Professor Woodbridge had a third, decidedly different, philosophy. I asked him once what he thought of Santayana's thesis that mind has no causal place in the world. 'When Santayana says that,' he replied, 'he is ignoring obvious fact for the sake of theory. The existence of his own book, lying on the table there, is evidence to the contrary.' (P.296.)

The Pathetic Piety Toward "Nature"—
That "Collective Name
For Quite A Mess Of Miscellaneous Stuff"

And in connection with the word "Nature," so all-inclusive to the new, as well as the old, naturalistic philosophers, Professor Costello has this interesting observation to make:

Typical of words summing up a point of view is the word 'Nature' itself. To Woodbridge,

> as to some other naturalistic philosophers, it carries a connotation of something very solid and real, an emotional unification of all things. Toward Nature they feel a natural piety, as toward the great Mother of us all. For myself, I do not feel that piety, whether expressed by a Marcus Aurelius or a Woodbridge. To me Nature seems rather a collective name for quite a mess of miscellaneous stuff. Nature should not, by some 'pathetic fallacy,' become a substitute for God. And if there are no gods, that is that. Let us not be 'angry with them for not existing.' (Pp. 298-299.)

What Professor Edman says of the idealist in philosophy, who in his philosophizing somehow recognizes Nature, "but with regret or contempt or reluctance," to wit, that the idealist has his cake and eats it too, or has it eaten up into the Absolute or Absolute Being or God, may likewise be said of his own assumption that the seemingly "preternatural" phenomenon of mysticism may be comfortably fitted into the procrustean bed of Naturalism. But his own delineation of this mystic phenomenon, as is apparent in many passages in his chapter under discussion, quoted above, makes that assumption quite unconvincing. Note, for instance, the implications in the following passage, part of which I quoted previously, where his own just quoted word 'preternatural' appears:—

> For the less exalted, the intent absorption in the unique finality of a work of art or of a beloved person is an illustration both more imaginable and more familiar. But there is another realm, that of morals and religion, where even the common man recognizes the authority both unmistakable and *preternatural* (italics, ours) with which the mystic speaks. (P. 195.)

Unless my eyes deceive me, one finds here a naturalistic philosopher's off-guard—and for that very reason, an intriguingly significant—admission or, at least, implication, that the character of the mystic's message is 'preternatural.' In fact, it appears, that the uncommon man, even more than the common man, so finds it. Now, our author—were he able to throw aside his naturalistic inhibitions on this subject, at least—could just as well have used here the term 'supernatural,' instead of 'preternatural.' Or does he mean to tell us that 'preternatural' means something less supernatural than 'supernatural'? And if so, what, pray, may this fine difference in definition, touching these trans-rational and ultimately inexplicable matters, really amount to?

"Is You Is, Or Is You Ain't, My Baby?"

Anent this significantly unconscious ambiguity of terms, one is reminded of the pertinent query

of the recent popular "swing" ditty: "Is You Is, or Is You Ain't, My Baby?" Is, or is not, the mystical insight Nature's exclusive "baby," in Professor Edman's own 'preternatural' conception of it?

Let us briefly recall the ineffable nature of the phenomenon of mysticism, in our author's own telling description of it. Let us recall its definite and grand emphasis upon Being or Pure Being—terms, by the way, that have always given another naturalistic philosopher—John Dewey—the tantrums. Let us call to mind the transcendent virtue, ascribed to it, of mysteriously affording us those preciously ineffable insights into Reality that are inaccessible to our reason. Let us recall its uncanny powers, wherewith it has always so mysteriously endowed the great prophets of the moral and religious life, so that in their pronouncements "men have always recognized (and, as is implied by Professor Edman, rightly so) the utterance of persons who seemed to be the voice of a force larger and more compelling and more absolute than those persons themselves." Indeed, it was by virtue of this unique power that "their communication was not by proof but by contagion, the contagion of a reality responded to by the depths of personality which their charged words touched."

(Pp. 195-196.)

When we recall, I say, that our author is disposed to grant to the mystic insight the possibility

of these spiritually exalted virtues, is not one justified in asking this pertinent question:— In view of all this, does not the profounder wisdom on the subject of mysticism lie, not with the Naturalist "reductionist," who chooses to reduce this ineffable phenomenon to "but another" phase of impersonal "Nature," but rather with the philosophical theist, who soberly refuses so to glorify Nature as to torture it to explain *everything?* Resides not that profounder wisdom rather with the theist, who unemotionally regards "Nature," however generously defined, as but a "collective name for quite a mess of miscellaneous stuff," and as not so all-inclusive as to be able to do full philosophic justice to all of Life's deep mysteries, and, amongst them, to that tremendously ineffable mystery of mysticism, itself? May not the deeper insight be accredited rather to the theist, who prefers to ascribe that spiritually awing mystical experience of man, together with our other great mysteries, to something spiritually deeper and more meaningful than "Nature"; to something, that is, that he calls "Super-natural"—with all the significant implications to the human spirit that this currently much-disparaged term holds?

Like Calls Unto Like—
Personality Unto Personality!

Again, because Professor Edman, as naturalistic

philosopher, views the phenomenon of mysticism through his naturalistic spectacles, the best that he can grant for the Object of the apperçus, or vision, of the religious mystic, is Pure Being, that is, *sans* Personality,—whatever such a monstrosity may be. True, unlike another naturalistic philosopher (Dewey), who becomes awfully distressed at the very mention of this word, Professor Edman speaks respectfully, nay, ecstatically, of Pure Being, and of the "rapt engulfment in Pure Being" on the part of all mystics. "Such rapt engulfment in Pure Being has been," we are told, "the aim of Indian philosophers and, for all one knows, their attainment." But note the very next sentence: "It (this engulfment in Pure Being) has been the inspiration behind the specifically Christian language of the intellectual mystics of the Middle Ages, of whom St. Bonaventura's *Itinerary of the Mind into God* in its title alone would be the best illustration." (P. 195.) Now, what is the implication of the significant phrase "behind the specifically Christian language"? It is, apparently, the altogether unjustified identification of the Christian mystics' vision of God with that of the impersonal Pure Being of the Indian mystics! But the Christian mystics—need it be recalled?—were theists, and their mystic vision concerned a God in the traditional theistic sense of the term, namely, a *Personal* Being.

This being so, this logical question arises: Once one grants the possible validity of the mystic insight, as Professor Edman does, is one justified in dogmatically insisting that it can only eventuate into the impersonalized Being of the Indian mystics? May not that posited mystical insight reveal to other mystics, a Being or God as Moral Personality? Was not this, in fact, the very definite belief of the Christian mystics, and long before them, as we have seen, of the Prophets of Israel? Indeed, once one assumes the mystic insight as deriving, not from external nature, but from the depths of man's personality, as Professor Edman does, who, I ask, is on stronger philosophic grounds than the theistic mystic who avers that *his* mystic vision makes him envision his Being or God as Personality?

The Philosophic Strait-Jacket Of Naturalism

Is it not the fact that "Nature," in the naturalistic philosopher's conception of it, "knows" of no Personality, that explains Professor Edman's unwarranted assumption that the mystic insight must of necessity be restricted to vague Impersonality? To dogmatize on our subject through naturalistic spectacles, is only to reveal, as the theist sees it, the philosophic strait-jacket of Naturalism. To the

theistic mystic, the mystic insight speaks unmistakably of Divine Personality. On what grounds, then, can, above all, the believer in the possible validity of mysticism logically deny the latter's uniquely "personal" claim?

Those Ecstasies Over Dumb Impersonalism!

Incidentally, one may soberly ask, what may this ultimate Reality or Being be, over which Professor Edman himself goes into ecstasies, if it is less than Personality? If this "stream of life," with which the mystic is believed to come into contact through his ineffable vision, is but sheer, dumb Unconsciousness, why go into such philosophic ecstasies over it? What earthly meaning can communion therewith have for the acutely conscious spirit of man? And wherein is the wisdom, on the part of self-conscious man, in making such a consciously sacrificial effort to attain that mystic state? If these be the fruits of the mystical ecstasy, then the cynical candidate for a taste thereof would be well advised to take one of those effortless pharmaceutical pills which are prescribed for that purpose by some of the aforementioned psychologists!

Impersonalism As The Result Of The Obsession With The Problem Of Man's Suffering

As was indicated earlier, one can well under-

stand the Indian mystics' consuming desire—and the inevitable fruits which that desire brought forth—for Impersonalism in their mystic visions. The ancient Indian world-weary mystics, as in the case of the Buddha, were obsessed with the sense of Man's suffering, which they attributed to the existence of man's ego, man's individuality or personality. It is this evil thing, so they imagined, that creates that painful Illusion which is the World and its toll of suffering. The logical way, then, for escape therefrom, as they saw it, was the quixotic attempt, on the part of the individual, to destroy his individuality. That was to be accomplished, of course, *via* the mystic discipline which they prescribed therefor. Through that discipline, the individual was persuaded to lose, or attempted to lose, his individuality into the All or Absolute or Pure Being, which latter—God forbid!—*must* not, and, therefore, *cannot,* be possessed of Personality. For that would only be tantamount to jumping from the frying pan into the fire! In accordance with a philosophy of all-out other-worldliness and world- and life-weariness, the Mystic Path must inevitably lead—in imagination, at least—to just that sort of impersonal Nirvana. The theist, for one, as I observed before, would not deny the "enlightened ones," under their Bo trees, whatever "enlightenment" that mystic absorption of their

egos into an ALL might afford them. He cannot, however, help but question the quality and worth of that enlightenment. He cannot, above all, fail to be puzzled by the ecstatic claims made for it.

"It Only Goes To Show—"

As to this undiscriminating readiness to rush into ecstasy over the mystic state, however questionable its content, the theist may fittingly recall the story told of the near-sighted preacher who was delivering a sermon on the subject of woman, and who used as his text the verse from Genesis II: "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her to the man." It so happened that the balance of the story of the creation of woman was continued on the next page, and in turning the page of his Bible, our near-sighted preacher inadvertently turned over several pages, and began to read from the story of the building of Noah's ark: "The length thereof, three hundred cubits, the width, fifty cubits, and the height, thirty cubits." The poor preacher was naturally quite embarrassed, but, fortunately, soon regained his wits. "I must admit, my good friends," he hesitantly

explained, "that I have not come across this description of woman before, but this only again goes to show what a wonderful creature woman is!"...

The Mystic Insight And Varied Visions Of Reality

The mystic insights of other people, with totally different attitudes toward life in general and human life in particular—we have all the philosophical right to imagine—will afford them totally different visions of Reality. And among the latter, we cannot exclude the Prophets' vision of Reality in terms of Personality.

The Prophets' Vision Un-beclouded By The Problem Of Human Suffering

The Prophets and Sages of Israel were not world-weary men. They did not allow the phenomenon of human suffering to fester in their minds into an all-out obsession, leading to very strange and blind alleys. They were poignantly aware of it, as we have seen, and soberly attempted to assuage it by both a realistic social program of human betterment, as well as by a profounder re-interpretation of the "ways of God" with man, as in the instance of the author of the Book of Job.

Their Transcendent Regard For Human Personality

The Prophets and Sages of Israel, furthermore, as we have seen, entertained a transcendent regard for human personality. In fact, they looked upon it as Creation's supreme achievement, as nothing less than divine, and, in its highest moral development, as man's vehicle of gaining communion with the Divine.

Hence Their Vision Of God As Moral Personality

With such a transcendent conception of human personality, it was natural, nay, inevitable, for the Prophets to conceive of God as Personality. God, as we argued before, may be more than that, but, to the deeply prophetic soul, He certainly cannot be less. If He be less, there would be nothing, or nothing much, for man to commune with, or be worthy of his communion. And as the prophet's mystic insight came to him from the depths of his personality, it was but inevitable that it should reveal to him Personality. Like calls unto like—personality unto Personality!

The Reason For The Prophets' Passion For Justice

It is important to note, it was the Prophets' pro-

found recognition that human personality finds its highest spiritual fruition in society, and, supremely, in a social order that is securely founded on justice, which explains both the glorious this-worldliness of their ethics and their own sacrificial consecration to the heroic task of establishing justice in society.

Their Realistic Approach To The Problem Of Human Suffering

This heroic task, which they laid down as the redeeming mandate for man, was also their realistic solution for human suffering—at least for that large portion of it that is the result of human oppression —of man's inhumanity to man.

Re That Post-Utopian Residue Thereof, And God As Moral Personality

As for that not-at-all negligible residue of human suffering that even an ideal social and world order will never entirely eliminate, seeing that man is human and Nature is that obdurate something that we know it to be—the Prophets, thanks to their vision of God as Moral Personality, did not feel constrained to build on that painful fact of human suffering a quixotic philosophy of an impersonalized Nirvana. Their vision of God as

Moral Personality rather afforded them the exalting humility and redeeming confidence that enabled them to believe that that inescapable portion of human suffering was somehow meaningfully involved in God's inscrutable cosmic purposes, in which man, by virtue of his highest moral and ideal life, somehow ultimately and significantly shares.

"In Serenity And In Confidence—"

Indeed, this is the essence of the Prophetic *ḥokmah*—of their mystically-inspired Moral Philosophy or Wisdom:—

> "In serenity and in confidence (in the ultimate beneficence of the universe), shall be your strength! (Isaiah 30.15.)

My Sympathetic Critic Reluctantly Concedes—

I must reluctantly confess, Dad, Harold resumed, that your potent *addenda* on the mystic phenomenon is an eye-opener to this benighted "modern." This, despite the fact that I, like so many other moderns, am possesed of such boundless faith in the power of reason to clear up—if not on the morrow, then, at least, after an indefinite number of to-morrows—all our ultimate mysteries, including the mystery of mysticism itself,—and on

naturalistic principles, to boot! I am, however, beginning to see more clearly the thesis of the ultimate limitations of our human reason and the all-pervasive role that the non- or super-rational potencies of the human soul play in the many phases of our life. I am also beginning to perceive more clearly that this sanguine faith of the modern intellectualist to "unscrew the inscrutable" is but a chimerical hope. It is, in fact, a faith almost as mystical in its nature as, even the mighty faith of the theist.

I must, further, confess that your criticism of Professor Edman's great assumption that the mystic phenomenon can comfortably be fitted into—as you picturesquely described it—the procrustean bed of Naturalism, is fully justified, although my modern naturalistic proclivities, I must confess, naturally incline me toward Professor Edman's naturalistic faith. What, in fact, becomes clearer to me is this ultimate faith-element—of which most of us are unaware—at the bottom of, even, our philosophic *and* scientific attitudes toward the universe. It is this "modern" cock-sureness, touching our metaphysical ultimates, that I feel is slowly but surely evaporating in my mind.

I am beginning to feel, in brief, much intellectual sympathy for your thesis, that though we cannot have rational proof for the theistic faith, there is, nevertheless, a potent philosophic justifi-

cation for it. Yes, provided we agree—as we undogmatically must—that Philosophy has more than one "Way" for its ultimate vision of the universe, and that Idealism, with its ultimate reliance on human reason, or, even, the so easily persuasive, up-to-the-minute Naturalism, with its dogmatic insistence on that all-inclusive "Nature," is really not "the end of the matter, all having been heard." Professor Edman's very pointing up of Mystical Insight as one of the respectable "Ways" of Philosophy—I seem to hear you say, and I am inclined to agree with you—when thoroughly digested, may well be a potent, however unintended, challenge to the "all-inclusive" claims of the Naturalistic thesis.

(C)—But His "Inner Sceptic" Still "Sticks Around," Wielding The Club Of The Problem Of Suffering

But, Harold continued, alas, and alack, the eternal sceptic within my benighted "modern" soul will still not down! He now argues that as much as he may have been shaken up philosophically, his feet still stand secure on the *terra firma* of the every-day evidence of innocent human suffering in the world, and the fatal contradiction which that faith-challenging fact forever holds to the theistic thesis.

Among the many faith-shattering items in this

connection, he keeps on reminding me in particular of the desperate plight of God's very own Servant People—that ill-starred Job amongst the Nations—Israel!

"It Is Hard To Be A Jew!"

In this connection, Dad, I am reminded of the popular saying of our own brethren: "It is hard to be a Jew!" This intriguing saying has, as you know, many significant angles, the most common one having reference, of course, to the age-old tragedy of Jewish persecution. I have in mind now, however, that facet of this saying which specifically applies to our religious problem, namely, to the difficulty of being a *believing* Jew.

Take a youth, like myself, in the act of contemplating the present-day utterly indescribable Jewish scene. Here is a people that, despite the human frailties, which it shares with all other peoples, rates—excepting to the jaundiced eye of the rabid anti-Semite—as a great, historic people by virtue of its rich spiritual contributions to the Western world. One need not be a chauvinist to record that through its long list of prophets, saints and teachers, it has functioned as the religious teacher and conscience of Western mankind. In its long history of martyrdom for its faith, it has hewn faithfully and uniquely to the historic role, so touchingly assigned to it by Deutero-Isaiah, of *Ebed Yahweh*:

God's Servant People for Mankind. Forgetting for the moment—if one can—this people's uniquely tragic past at the hands of an ungrateful and cruel world, and confining ourselves solely to this people's present, what meets one's shocked gaze? Is it not the unprecedented, horrible tragedy of six millions of its souls bestially murdered by a supposedly Christian nation? Is it not the further heart-rending spectacle of its pitiful European remnant, now desperately knocking, knocking at the gates of its ancient homeland, long ago wrested from it, and destroyed, by its ancient "Esau," and being cruelly turned back therefrom by another "Esau," though one, to be sure, with a Jacob-like voice of Socialist liberalism?[32] Contemplating this wholesale tragedy, how in the name of common sense, I ask, can a thinking Jew of today intelligently reconcile this anomalous state of affairs with his people's own Prophetic faith in a God of History? A God, that is, Who supposedly knows what is going on in His world, Who is supremely concerned with Justice and Righteousness, Who "shall neither slmber nor sleep," touching, especially, the fate of His own faithful Servant! And need I remind you that I have not so soon altogether forgotten your inspiring exposition of Job's religious treatment of the problem of the suffering of the righteous or the innocent?

My invisible but irrepressible sceptic, unlike

Job's Satan, you note, Dad, is anything but a cynic with respect to man. Nay, that prophetic conviction of man's integrity, of which you have so convincingly and inspiringly spoken, is definitely his. When recalling Israel's anomalous lot, his doubts are, in fact, directed—as were Job's earlier questionings—not toward the integrity of man, but rather toward the moral nature of Israel's own, theistic God! This down-to earth, heaven-rending anomaly justifies him, and most effectively, in maintaining his scepticism—despite all your foregoing most persuasive Argument, *and* notwithstanding Job's final and exalted Vision of Reconciliation—as to the existence of such, or any sort of, a *moral* God. More than once, Dad, have I dubbed this inner, irrepressible sceptic of mine, a scoundrel for such un-godly scepticism! I keep on telling him that he is *persona non-grata* in good society. But he keeps on protesting that I am brutally unfair to him, who is nothing, if not a gentleman,—and that out of sheer regard for my good reason, he definitely intends to "stick around."

The Essential, But Generally Overlooked, Nature Of Religious Faith

I am charmed by your frankness, son, I rejoined, to say nothing of your engaging sense of humor. You are, however, overlooking the essential, but generally overlooked, fact concerning all

religious faith—whether theistic or otherwise—namely, that religious faith, when perceptively understood, is not a scientifically or rationally proven proposition. Religious faith, philosophically considered, is, as its very term frankly indicates, rather a great, challenging Moral Assumption, a spiritually daring belief, which, despite many and varied rational contradictions, an individual *chooses* to challengingly hold on to because of its tremendous meaning in his life—because of the desperately needed assurance that it affords him touching the very worth-whileness of life itself—because of the unique gift of courage wherewith it endows him to confidently and nobly carry on his life's work, in the very teeth of its inevitable struggles and disillusionments.

You are, in other words, son, forgetting that religious faith is a *challenge*! A challenge, at once to that eternal sceptic within all of us, who is concerned in paying homage solely to his rationalizing faculty, as well as a challenge to the mystic endowments of our soul. No religion, profoundly worthy of the name, has ever made an appeal to man otherwise than as a challenge to the faith or mystic potencies of man's soul. To be sure, some of the world's great religions are more "reasonable" than others, as admittedly and eminently is, for instance, Prophetic Religion. But, fundamentally, all great religions are ultimately based on this ele-

ment of faith in the ultimate beneficence of our universe. This being the essential nature of religious faith, it is but natural that there should inevitably lurk on the periphery, as it were, of everyman's faith, the element of intellectual doubt. It is but natural, then, that your own troublesome "sceptic," too, continue to "stick around."

Even the privileged, prophetic few, to whom faith has become not only a life-sustaining conviction but a veritable *awareness* of the existence of their Moral God, even they were, on occasion, disturbed by that Jobian Problem, which tempts your own "inner sceptic" to "stick around." Even the prophet Jeremiah was often plagued, as we have seen, with the faith-disturbing query: "Wherefore do the ways of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they secure that deal treacherously?"

The significant difference, however, between the position of the prophet, or any other deeply religious soul, who has not, and the individual who has, allowed himself to succumb to the "sceptic" within him, is that the former has, what the latter has not: Someone to meaningfully address that disturbing query to. And that, you must admit, makes quite a difference!

The Pragmatic Argument In One Incisive Sentence

This reminds me of the incisive observation

made to me many years ago by your learned grandfather, now residing in Jerusalem.[33] During a heated discussion, which I, as a young man, had with him on religion—and when did discussions on religion fail to be heated?—I recalled to him this very contradiction to the theistic faith, to wit, the anomalous suffering of the innocent in general and of the Jewish people in particular. "We," he calmly, but firmly, declared, "who believe in the existence of God, have at least the comfort of having Somebody to complain to for our misfortunes, but those who argue—to use the famous Talmudic phrase—*let din we-let dayan* (there is neither Justice nor Judge in the world),—those poor fools haven't even Someone to complain to!"

Which, incidentally, is as excellent a statement as I have come across—and the briefest—of the so-called Pragmatic Argument for theistic faith.

And since you have especially pointed up the fact of the innocent suffering of our people as an outstanding example of the Problem of Suffering, which so readily becomes the cue for your eternal "sceptic" to appear on your mental scene to challenge your faith, I might add here one or two brief observations on this phase of our subject. And with that I propose to bring to an end our discussion of the Philosophy of Prophetic Faith, reserving for you, of course, the privilege of making any concluding remarks you care to, touch-

ing our stimulating and, I hope, helpful discussion.

The Noble And Fruitful Pragmatism Of Israel's Faith

That to the average Jew, the unprecedented age-long suffering of his people—God's "very own people," whom God has "chosen" as his Servant—should prove utterly annihilating to his faith in a theistic God—in a Prophetic God of Justice—would not at all be surprising. Yet, if you would ask the average Jew, whose memory of the centuries of his people's travail—to say nothing of his own portion of that "Cup of Fury"—has made him a bit of a philosopher,—if, I say, you would ask him why, in despite of all this, and aside from his very understandable habit of loyalty to his people's Tradition and the general human inertia that is connected with all religious belief, why he still holds on to his God, he will, no doubt, briefly, calmly, but firmly, answer something like this:

"Why, my good friend, if I give up this faith, what else have I left in the world? It is this very faith that keeps me *going,* as it has all of my ancestors throughout our endless ages of darkness. This faith has been our most potent armour not only of physical survival, but of moral survival as well. In the midst of universal hatred and calumny, this faith has saved our self-respect, our *morale.* It has, moreover, given us the boon of

hope—hope of ultimate redemption in our old-new Land of Israel, which the God of our Fathers has promised us through the inspired utterances of our Prophets. What more sustaining justification, need I seek for my faith,—as impossible as it has so often been to hold on to that at-once difficult but *morale*-sustaining trust?"

The Faith That Triumphs Over Fate, Which Makes Man "But Little Less Than God"

Perhaps this noble pragmatism of the Jew's faith is even more poignantly brought out in the eloquent record of a medieval chronicler, which your justly famous uncle had occasion to quote in one of his discourses. I herewith quote this challenging record, and with this, I shall conclude:

> A shipload of Jewish refugees from medieval Spain was swept by the plague, and the captain of the ship cast them all ashore upon a barren and uninhabited coast. Most of the unfortunate refugees perished from hunger. Some of them pressed on desperately to find some human habitation. Among them was a man, his wife and his two children. They struggled on through the barren waste, until the mother fainted and died. The man then carried his children in his arms and upon his

shoulders until he, too, fell down and fainted from hunger and exhaustion. When he came to, he discovered that his two children had died. He then arose and said: 'Master of the Universe, much hast Thou done to make me forsake my faith. Know, however, that in spite of it all, I am a Jew, and nothing that Thou hast brought upon me will make any difference.' He then covered the bodies of his dead children with earth and scrub and walked on into the wilderness to find a human abode. . .[34]

The End Of Our Matter—
All Having Been Said. . . .

The noble pragmatic angle of the theistic or Prophetic faith, Dad, Harold observed, cannot be more briefly and eloquently stated. This is more convincing, I dare say, than a long and complicated philosophical disquisition on this particular phase of our subject.

I should like to note, further, that I find the point, made in your last remarks, as to the generally overlooked essential nature of religious faith, very helpful on our subject as a whole. In overlooking this essential characteristic of faith, which we perhaps do because of its obviousness, we fail to realize that the real nature of faith is that of a daring, personal *challenge*! Forgetting that religi-

ous faith is essentially of the nature of such a challenge, rather than a rationalistically fool-proof proposition, we fail to treat it as such, and thus fail to profit by its message of challenge. That is to say, when we become aware—as we often must—of its recurrent element of doubt, we allow our faith, which was meant to serve us as a positive and lifting Moral Challenge, to degenerate into a negative and spiritually debilitating "halting between two opinions," an attitude which was so characteristically denounced, as I recall, by that doughty prophetic soul—Elijah. Religious faith, you rightly insist, is basically a *challenge*—at once to our scepticism—philosophic and otherwise—and to our deeply ingrained moral wisdom, which knowingly counsels us to explore the rich mystic possibilities of profound moral living for the staying serenity of the human spirit. And, especially, in those turbulent moments when the latter finds itself *in extremis!*

The intriguing thing, to me, Dad—the end of *our* matter—of our most stimulating discussion—all having been said, pro and con—and said honestly, and well—on that highly controversial Biblical "end of the matter," is that your Argument for Prophetic or theistic faith emerges, essentially, even as your Elysian Aristotle has indicated, in this very character of a spiritual-moral Challenge.

This is eloquently evident in your singular high-

lighting of the mystic implications of that "still small voice." That, of course, adds up to a challenge to the basically mystical foundations of our psyche, to which you have so persuasively pointed.

Your further pointing to the sacrificially moral Prophetic Way, toward which that mystic "still small voice" beckons, as *the* Way to the Prophetic God, is undoubtedly, also, in the nature of such a challenge.

So also is your insistence that a deep-lying, abiding faith is neither a matter of an easy acceptance of Tradition, nor the prize of a conveniently arrived-at Syllogism, but is rather an arduous, often lifelong, spiritual-moral *achievement*!

Happily emerging in this grand character of dual challenge to deeper moral living for its own sake, which none but the cynic will want to disparage, and to the morally nourished, hope-freighted mystical endowments of our personalities, which none but the closed-minded sceptic will be rash enough to dogmatically deny, your Argument, Dad, it seems to me, cannot fail to have a potent appeal. And I must confess, even to the benighted "moderns"! To such of them, at least, who, as you would say, will wisely choose to give that not-at-all-omniscient "inner sceptic" of theirs a needed, lengthy rest, in order that they may hazard—unafraid of philosophic doubt—the Challenging Way on which the Prophets trod. . . .

Adieu!

Thanks, Dad, for giving me something stimulating to mull over in the coming years, during which I shall be called upon to do my bit to straighten out this benighted little globe of ours—*via* the foxholes of the Pacific Islands. And I don't mind, Dad, if, despite this dual hazard of faith and the war, we part with the good old Adieu. . . .

God be with you, my son!

EPILOGUE:

The Still Small Voice . . .

Several years after Harold had begun to help "straighten out this benighted little globe of ours *via* the fox-holes of the Pacific Islands," the following paragraph appeared in one of his letters, after a complete silence on our subject since he left for the war:

> No, Dad, I have not altogether forgotten your prophetic message, of what now appears so long ago, on the subject of that "still small voice." It would no doubt please you to learn that it has, in fact, proved helpful to me here, on occasion. In the midst of the sickening muck, and sweat, and blood of the Nature- and Man-made Gehenna of these Pacific Islands, that "still small voice," Dad, has enabled me, on occasion, to look beyond all this Desolation, and to find, even here, something encouraging for the human spirit! Among

other things, it helped me to direct my thoughts to that grand heroism of so many of our men, who performed their Duty, as they saw it, unafraid of Death! As though Death did not matter, but Duty did! As though Duty was informed with a mystic Destiny that swallows up Death! . . . It was not difficult during those rare moments to envision these heroic youths as gods, confidently marching to a Destiny that is more significant than Death! . . . At those *in extremis* moments, Dad, when one is driven to curse Existence and die, it is good to cup one's inward ear toward that Voice of Great Stillness. . . . For during those desperate moments, it *does* somehow help to unite, across the great chasm of the ages, one's inmost being with the suffering, but exultant, immortal spirits of the Jeremiahs and the Jobs of the distant past. Yes, it *does* then inspire one, with them and through them, to "see" beyond the Desolation—a new Israel, and, in the very teeth of personal tragedy, to capture a precious bit of their indefeasible confidence in Existence and of that deep, deathless serenity which was theirs as a result of this mystic trust. . . .

NOTES and INDEX

NOTES

1. Morris R. Cohen, in the Symposium, *Religion Today, A Challenging Enigma,* edited by Arthur L. Swift, Jr., 1933 (McGraw-Hill), Chapter V, pp. 75-105.
2. In *Selected Papers of Bertrand Russell,* 1927 (The Modern Library), pp. 14-15.
3. From the present author's *The Ethics of Judaism,* 1938 (Bloch), p. 48.
4. Irwin Edman, *Four Ways of Philosophy,* 1945 (Henry Holt), p. 325, *et passim.*
5. See the present author's *Justice and Judaism in the Light of Today,* 1928 (Bloch), Chapter III, pp. 35 ff.
6. See the Jewish Encyclopedia, s. v., *Middot, Shelosh-Esreh,* Vol. VIII, pp. 546-547.
7. *Kritik of Practical Reason,* Part II, Abbott's Translation, p. 260.
8. For an exposition of this thesis, see, for instance, Josephy Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper, A Study and a Confession,* 1929 (Harcourt Brace), Chapter V, "The Tragic Fallacy", pp. 115 ff.
9. Irwin Edman, op. cit., Chapter III, pp. 165 ff.
10. See below, pp. 237 ff.
11. *Ethic, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order,* Benedict De Spinoza, Translated by W. Hale White, 1927 (Oxford University Press), pp. 270 ff., and cf. p. 87.
12. Albert Einstein "Cosmic Religion", in *Cosmic Religion, with Other Opinions and Aphorisms,* 1931 (Covici-Friede), pp. 52 f. and cf. pp. 47 f.
13. And see below, pp. 263 ff.
14. See below, pp. 244 ff.
15. For Prof. Edman's fuller statement on this subject, see below, pp. 235 f.
16. See, for instance, William Pepperell Montague, *Belief Unbound, A Promethean Religion for the Modern World,* 1930 (Yale Uni-

versity Press), Chapter III, "God Finite and God Infinite", pp. 66 ff.

17. Cf. Note 11.
18. Morris R. Cohen, "The Intellectual Love of God", in *The Faith of a Liberal,* Selected Essays, 1946 (Henry Holt), p. 307 f.
19. Cf. Felix Adler, *An Ethical Philosophy of Life,* 1919 (Appleton), p. 126.
20. Cf. Auguste Comte and his later disciples.
21. See, for instance, Joseph Zeitlin, *Disciples of the Wise, The Religious and Social Opinions of American Rabbis,* 1945 (Teachers College, Columbia University), p. 76.
22. Morris R. Cohen, at the end of that essay; see Note 1.
23. Joseph Wood Krutch, op. cit., Chapter III, "The Disillusionment With The Laboratory", pp. 56 ff.
24. See below, pp. 246 f.
25. William P. Montague, op. cit., pp. 70 ff.
26. W. P. Montague, op. cit., p. 90.
27. See Note 28.
28. Cf. Moses Buttenweiser, *The Book of Job,* 1922 (Macmillan), Introduction, pp. 61 f., whose interpretation of the Book of Job and English rendition of the Hebrew text we have largely followed here.
29. See above, p. 34.
30. For a good synopsis of such pronouncements, see, for instance, Prof. John F. Cronin's *Economic Analysis and Problems,* 1945 (American Book), Ch. 24, "Programs of Social Religion, Social Protestantism and Social Judaism", and Ch. 25, "Programs of Social Reform, Social Catholicism", pp. 508-564.
31. In *Naturalism and the Human Spirit,* a Symposium, edited by Y. H. Krikorian, 1943 (Columbia University Press).
32. My friendly antagonist could not, of course, have known at the time these discussions took place of the now historic termination of the British Mandate and of the subsequent re-establishment of the State of Israel on the Fifth of Iyar, 5708 (May 14, 1948)—almost nineteen hundred years after its destruction by the long-defunct Roman Empire. This historic miracle, Harold has since unabashedly intimated, has enabled him during his rare mystical moments to make his eternal "inner sceptic" reel, even on the supposedly incontestable *"terra firma"* of his scepticism.
33. Moses Silver, author of the Hebrew Commentaries on the Biblical

Books of Genesis and Exodus, entitled *Chashukei Kessef* (Delights of Silver), Volume I, 1938; Volume II, 1941, Jerusalem. Rabbi Moses Silver has since passed away in Jerusalem, on January 12, 1949.

34. Cited from Ibn Verga, *Shebet Yehudah* (Hanover, 1855), p. 90, in *The World Crisis and Jewish Survival,* by Abba Hillel Silver, 1941 (Richard R. Smith), pp. 51-52.

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ERRATA

Page 9, line 14: "cynism" — should read "cynicism."

Page 68, lines 24-25: "but a little less than God" — should read "but little less than God."

Page 85, line 23: "philosphers" — should read "philosophers."

Page 91, line 5: "The Lord hath spoken," — should read "The Lord God hath spoken,".

Page 98, line 22, and elesewhere: the "moral law within" — should read "the moral law within."

Page 163, lines 15-16: "doctrine of individual retributions" — should read "doctrine of individual retribution."

Page 239, line 5: "abstraction" — should read "abstractions."

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